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THE SECRET HISTORY

OF THE

COURT AND REIGN

OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

BY

[C. Mackenzie]

A MEMBER OF HIS PRIVY COUNCIL:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

INTRODUCTORY SKETCHES

OF THE PRECEDING PERIOD FROM THE ACCESSION OF

JAMES I.

WITH NOTES, AND A SUPPLEMENT

CONTINUING THE NARRATIVE IN A SUMMARY MANNER TO

THE REVOLUTION:

BY THE EDITOR.

———*Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,*
Et quorum pars magna fui——— VIRG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

THE SECRET HISTORY

COURT AND REIGN

OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

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The king's plauſible ſpeech at the opening of the new ſeſſions—Addreſs of the commons againſt any toleration or indulgence—Remonſtrance on the lenity ſhewn to papiſts—Fallacy of a ſeeming compliance with the wiſhes of parliament—Spur to obtain a preſent ſupply—Changes in the cabinet, and in the management of the houſe of commons—Character and riſe of ſir Henry Bennet—William Coventry's appearance on the political theatre—League of friendſhip between thoſe two favourites—Profits of the poſt-office and wine-licenſes granted to the duke of York and his heirs—Introduction of three new members at the ſelect meetings—Decline of the chancellor's power—The earl of Briſtol's raſh and malicious attempt—Curious intrigue to effect the removal of ſe-

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THE parliament aſſembled together on the day in February, to which they had been prorogued; and the king, in a very inſinuating ſpeech, endeavoured to ſeduce them into an approbation of what he had already done, and of what he farther deſired to do in favour of the Roman catholics. He expreſſed a full confidence in the wiſdom and affection of both houſes; and doubted not but when they ſhould have well examined the grounds of his late declaration, they would readily concur with him therein. Its great

The king's plauſible ſpeech at the opening of the new ſeſſion.

object

object was "to cure the distempers, and compose the different minds of the people;—to set bounds to the hopes of some, and to the fears of others." He said, "that he was, in his nature, an enemy to all severity for religion and conscience however mistaken, when it extended to capital and sanguinary punishments, which, he was told, had been begun in popish times;" and added, "that when he said this, he hoped he should not need to warn them against inferring thence, that he meant to favour popery." He confessed however, "there were many of that profession, who, having served his father and himself very well, might fairly hope for some part of the indulgence, which he would willingly afford to other dissenters; but he was far from intending to grant them a toleration or qualifying them thereby to hold any offices or places in the government: he even wished some laws to be made to hinder the growth and progress of their doctrines."

Having thus taken some pains to remove any suspicions that might be entertained of his partiality to papists, his majesty next touched upon the very delicate point, to which his speech and his wishes were alike directed; and that was, to engage parliament to acquiesce in his occasional exercise of the dispensing power. He said, "he trusted they had all so good an opinion of his zeal for the protestant religion, as that he needed not

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to tell them, that he would not yield to any therein, not to the biſhops themſelves, nor in his liking the uniformity of it, which was to be kept pure and uncorrupted, free from all other mixtures. Yet," he added, " if the diſſenters would demean themſelves peaceably and modeſtly under the government, he could heartily wiſh, he had ſuch a power of indulgence, to uſe upon occaſions, as might not needleſsly force them out of the kingdom, or ſtaying here, give them cauſe to conſpire againſt the peace of it."

Addreſs of the commons againſt any toleration, or indulgence.

Though upon this occaſion his majeſty exerted all his powers of perſuaſion and flattery, he could not remove the prejudices, or quiet the fears of parliament. On the contrary, their enmity to the preſbyterians, and their alarm at the encouragement which the popiſh clergy met with at court, were greatly increaſed even by the moſt cautious hints of the propoſed indulgence. Beſides the king was not ſupported in this meaſure by his own miniſters. There were but a few members of his privy council at this time, who were friendly to popery; and the party under their immediate influence in either houſe was by no means able to give the law to the others. The commons therefore, after ſome debate, reſolved upon preſenting an addreſs to the king, in which they renewed all their former aſſurances of zeal, duty, and affection, and declared that " it was with the utmoſt unwil-

lingneſs

lingneſs and reluctancy of heart they were brought to differ from any thing which his majeſty had thought fit to propoſe." They admitted, "that the diſtempers of ſome men's ſpirits, and the many mutinies and conſpiracies, which were carried on during the late intervals of parliament, might have reaſonably inclined his majeſty to endeavour to give ſome allay to thoſe ill humours by the hopes of indulgence, if parliament ſhould conſent to it; but that they humbly offered to his great wiſdom, that it was in no ſort adviſable to grant any indulgence to perſons, who preſumed to diſſent from the Act of Uniformity, and the religion eſtabliſhed."

As to his majeſty's declaration from Breda, the commons were of opinion, "that he ought not to be preſſed with it any farther; for that it was not a promiſe, but only a gracious declaration of his intentions to do what in him lay, and what a parliament ſhould adviſe him to do: that no ſuch advice of indulgence was ever given, or thought fit to be offered, nor could it be otherwiſe underſtood, as there were laws of uniformity then in being, which could not be diſpenſed with but by an act of parliament: and that thoſe, who pretended a right to that ſuppoſed promiſe, had put the right into the hands of their repreſentatives, who had paſſed, with his majeſty's conſent, the Act of Uniformity."

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In the next part of the addreſs, the commons enlarged on the conſequences which they thought would neceſſarily attend the indulgence propoſed. Its effects they ſaid would be, "to eſtabliſh ſchiſm by law; to take away all means of convicting recuſants; to diſcredit the gravity and wiſdom of parliament; to expoſe his majeſty to the reſtleſs importunity of every diſſenter; to increaſe ſects and ſectaries; to render the tranſition almoſt unavoidable from indulgence to a general toleration, and from that to an eſtabliſhment, which, for ought that could be foreſeen, might end in popery; and, in all probability, to occaſion great diſturbance, inſtead of tending to the peace of the kingdom."

After aſſigning ſome plauſible reaſons, why a ſettled tranquility and obedience were more likely to be produced by aſſerting the laws and the religion eſtabliſhed, according to the Act of Uniformity, than by any relaxation of thoſe laws, the commons concluded with declaring, "that, if any perſon ſhould preſume to diſturb the peace of the kingdom, they would, for ever, and on all occaſions be ready, with their utmoſt endeavour and aſſiſtance, to adhere to, and ſerve his majeſty, according to their bounden duty and allegiance *."

The

* Had the commons reſiſted the king's attempt to obtain the exerciſe of a diſpenſing power, on legal and conſtitutional grounds,

The king was very much vexed at ſo declared an oppoſition to his wiſhes: he expected more compliance from the parliament; and knew not how to account for the little effect produced by his own ſpeech, but by aſcribing the addreſs of the commons to the intrigues of the biſhops and the chancellor, whom he knew to be averſe to his exerciſe of a diſpenſing power. He did not, indeed, expreſs his diſpleaſure to the chancellor: he even

grounds, their oppoſition would have done them honour. But the corrupt members of the penſion-parliament were incapable of any thing either great, or good. Even when they acted right, which was very ſeldom, they did ſo from the impulſe of ſome deſpicable paſſion, never from generous, or patriotic motives. The whole of their addreſs was dictated by a mean, arbitrary, unjuſt, and intolerant ſpirit. Inſtead of aſſerting that the king could have no right to ſuſpend the execution of a poſitive law, they endeavoured by the moſt wretched ſophiſtry to prove, that he was relieved from the obligation of his promiſe at Breda, becauſe an act to the contrary had, through his own perfidious artifice, been paſſed by the parliament. They even pretended that the diſſenters could have no claim to the promiſed indulgence, as they had committed that and all their other rights to their repreſentatives in parliament, who paſſed the Act of Uniformity. According to this curious mode of reaſoning, the authority of a truſt juſtifies the abuſe of it, and perſons elected for the general welfare are not accountable for acting contrary to the intereſt of their conſtituents. Such a poſition is juſt as abſurd, to uſe the ſimile of a late writer, as to imagine, "that phyſicians, choſen to ſuperintend and cure the ſick in hoſpitals, have a right to kill their patients, if they pleaſe." The other abſurdities of the addreſs are ſo numerous and ſo groſs as not to admit of, or require a particular illuſtration.

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ſtudiouſly avoided all converſation on the ſubject; but thoſe, who knew him well, could clearly perceive his diſſatisfaction in his countenance, of which he had not quite ſo perfect a command as of his language *. In this jealouſy of his miniſter's endeavours privately to defeat his ſcheme of indulgence, he was encouraged not only by the earl of Briſtol, and all the Roman catholic junto, but by his fair idol, lady Caſtlemaine, who beſides her bearing an implacable enmity to the chancellor, ſoon declared herſelf of the popiſh perſuaſion, and became a warm and powerful advocate for its intereſts. This gave riſe to ſome changes in the cabinet, and in the management of the king's affairs in parliament, of which I ſhall preſently enter into a more particular account.

Remonſtrance on the lenity ſhewn to papiſts.

But whatever his majeſty had reſolved upon with thoſe ſecret adviſers, it was at this time carefully concealed. He took no public notice of the addreſs for almoſt three weeks; and then in a written meſſage, pretended an unwillingneſs to reply to the reaſons it contained, though, he ſaid, he found he had been miſunderſtood; but thanked the commons for their declaration to aſſiſt him againſt any perſon that ſhould preſume to diſturb the peace of

* Saville ſays in his character of Charles, "that his face was as little a blab as moſt men's; yet, though it could not be called a prattling face, it would ſometimes tell tales to a good obſerver."

the

the kingdom. As the commons, in their addreſs, had only given one hint reſpecting the poſſible eſtabliſhment of popery, they afterwards engaged the lords to concur with them in a particular remonſtrance on that ſubject alone, in which they repreſented to his majeſty, "that his lenity towards the papiſts had drawn into the kingdom a great number of Romiſh prieſts and jeſuits: they were therefore humble ſuiters to him, to iſſue out a proclamation to command all jeſuits, and all Engliſh, Iriſh, and Scotiſh popiſh prieſts, and all ſuch other prieſts as had taken orders from the ſee of Rome, or by authority thereof, (except ſuch foreign jeſuits or prieſts, as, by contract of marriage, were to attend the perſons of either of the queens, or, by the law of nations, to attend foreign embaſſadors) to depart the kingdom by a certain day, under pain of having the penalties of the law inflicted upon them."

Fallacy of a ſeeming compliance with the wiſhes of parliament.

There were, indeed, juſt grounds for this remonſtrance. The number of Romiſh prieſts increaſed every day to the moſt alarming degree; and their party, too much elated by court-favour, conducted themſelves with ſuch indiſcretion and inſolence as to fill the people with fears, and the parliament with jealouſy. The king manifeſted great uneaſineſs on this occaſion; and, after affecting to conſult with the ſelect committee of his privy council, he ſent a meſſage to the lords on the

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the second of April, to be also imparted to the commons, in which he said, "that he was not a little troubled, that his lenity and condescension towards many of the popish persuasion (which were but natural effects of his generosity and good-nature, after having lived so many years in the dominions of Roman catholic princes; and out of a just memory of what many of them had done and suffered in the service of his father and himself) had been made so ill use of, and so ill deserved, that the resort of jesuits and priests into the kingdom, had been thereby increased, with which his majesty was highly offended."

Having thus apologized for his indulgence to papists, and expressed his disapprobation of their abuse of it, he promised to issue out such a proclamation as the parliament desired, and to take care that it should be more effectual than any of that kind had ever been. His majesty farther declared to both houses, and to all his loving subjects, "that, as his affection and zeal for the protestant religion, and the church of England, had not been concealed, or untaken notice of in the world, so he was not, nor ever would be so solicitous for settling his own revenue, or providing for the peace and tranquility of the kingdom, as for the advancement and improvement of the religion established, and for using and applying all proper and effectual remedies to hinder the growth of popery,

popery, both which he in truth looked upon as the beſt expedients to eſtabliſh the peace and proſperity of all his kingdoms."

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Both houſes were highly pleaſed with this meſſage, as it promiſed the fulleſt gratification of their reſentment againſt papiſts. His majeſty ſeemed alſo very ready to comply with their requeſt, by immediately iſſuing the deſired proclamation againſt popiſh prieſts. But, inſtead of rendering it, as he ſaid, more effectual than any former one, the end of it was defeated by the artful omiſſion of a ſingle word in the clauſe recommended by parliament for excepting ſuch *foreign* jeſuits or prieſts as attended either of the queens, or any of the embaſſadors from Roman catholic countries. The word "*foreign*" was left out in the proclamation; and thus every prieſt might claim the benefit of the exception, under the pretence of belonging to one of the queens, or to ſome embaſſador. The fallacy was obvious, but no remarks were made upon it in either houſe; for, beſides their unwillingneſs to offend the king by too many repreſentations on the ſame head, they intended before the end of the ſeſſion, to frame a bill for enforcing the penal acts with more rigour againſt non-conformiſts of every deſcription. From this purpoſe, however, they were diverted by very great addreſs.

In

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Spur to obtain a preſent ſupply.

In the mean time the commons proceeded to take the ſtate of his majeſty's revenue into conſideration, and to deviſe means for making good ſuch deficiencies in it as were complained of. The produce of many of the ſupplies before voted were ſaid to have fallen ſhort of their expectations; but though this was the caſe in a few inſtances, the emptineſs of the exchequer was much more owing to the improvident and unthrifty expenditure of the money which had been received. The ſettlement of theſe matters led to inquiries into ſome other grievances, and occaſioned ſuch frequent interruptions of the main buſineſs, and ſo many unpleaſant meſſages to the king about objects of reform *, that his majeſty reſolved to apply the ſame

* In thoſe meſſages which reſpected only a very ſmall part of the errors of adminiſtration, the commons made it their humble deſire to the king to make no grant nor contract, with relation to the poſt-office; not to lay nor continue any impoſition in Scotland or Ireland on the woollen or other manufactures of England; to recal his proclamations forbidding the exportation of geldings; to appoint no merchants conſuls, but at the deſire of the merchants, nor, unleſs ſupported at their expence; to iſſue out his proclamation for the punctual and effectual execution and obſervance of the navigation-act, without any diſpenſation or connivance whatever; to recal ſuch diſpenſations as had been already granted; and to forbear to paſs any farther grants upon the commiſſions iſſued for the diſcovery of lands gained from the ſea, which commiſſions had been unduly exerciſed. What trifling objects of reform compared with the long catalogue of national grievances, which this parliament of infamous memory not only acquieſced in, but ſupported!

ſpur

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ſpur to their diſpatch which he had tried the year before with ſucceſs. He ſent for them to Whitehall, and after ſome gentle expoſtulation on the ſeeming abatement of their zeal for his ſervice, he ſtated the urgency of his wants, and the neceſſity of a preſent ſupply for the ſupport of government, and for the maintenance of the public peace. He alſo reminded them of the ſeaſon of the year, and of the propriety of making a receſs at Midſummer; and concluded with aſſuring them, upon his word, "that they ſhould have great comfort in what they did for him *."

The

* As this ſpeech affords another very curious ſpecimen of thoſe powers of inſinuation and addreſs, which Charles ſo often perverted to the worſt of purpoſes, the reader will not be diſpleaſed with our inſerting it at full length.

"Mr. Speaker, and you gentlemen of the houſe of commons, I have ſent for you this day to communicate with you, as good friends ought to do, when they diſcover the leaſt jealouſy growing, which may leſſen their confidence in each other; and you may all remember, that, when there was lately a little jealouſy among you upon ſomewhat I had ſaid or done, I made all the haſte I could to give you ſatisfaction, for which you all returned me your hearty thanks, and were, I think, ſatisfied.

"Gentlemen, it is in no man's power, no, not in your own power, to make me ſuſpect, or in the leaſt degree imagine it poſſible, that your affections and kindneſs are diminiſhed towards me. I know very well, that the people did never, in any age, uſe that vigilance and circumſpection in the election of repreſentatives of tried and known affections to the crown, of your good principles and unqueſtionable inclinations to the peace of the church and ſtate. You are the very ſame men, who,

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The king was not disappointed in his hopes of quickening the liberality of the commons by this artful mode of expostulation. As soon as they returned

who, at your first coming together, gave such signal testimonies of your affection and friendship to my person; of your zeal for the honour and dignity of the crown, and liberal support of government; and of your horror and detestation of those men, whose principles, you discerned, did keep them awake, to take all occasions to disturb the peace of the kingdom, and to embroil us in a new civil war, which is as much their endeavour now as ever, and, it may be, not enough abhorred by others, whose principles and ends are very different from theirs. You are the same men, who, at your first meeting, by a wonderful harmony and concurrence in whatsover I could wish, gave me reputation abroad, and security at home; made our neighbours solicit us for our friendship, and set a just value upon it; and, trust me, such a reputation is of such a vast importance as made my evil subjects even despair of bringing their wicked purposes to pass; and is it possible that the same persons can continue the same together, without the same affection to me? I am sure it is impossible; and yet I must tell you, the reputation I had from your concurrence and tenderness towards me, is not at all improved since the beginning of this session: indeed it is much lessened; and I am sure I never stood more in need of that reputation than at present, to carry me through the many difficulties, in which the public is at least as much concerned as myself.

"You cannot take it amiss (you shall use as much freedom with me) that I tell you, there hath not appeared that warmth in you of late, in the consideration of my revenue, as I expected, as well from some of your messages, as my own confidence in your care and kindness. It hath been said to myself, that it is usual for the parliament to give the crown extraordinary supplies upon emergent occasions, but not to improve the constant

revenue

turned to their houſe, they voted four entire ſubſidies for the ſupply of his majeſty's preſent occaſions; and the clergy, who were then aſſembled in convocation,

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revenue of the crown. I wiſh, and ſo do you, that nothing had been done in and by parliaments but what was uſual; but if ill parliaments contrive the ruin and diſinheriſon of the crown, God forbid but good parliaments ſhould repair it, how unuſual ſoever it is. If you yourſelves had not, in an extraordinary manner, improved my revenue, the government could not have been ſupported; and if it be not improved to the proportion you have deſigned, the government cannot be ſupported.

" Believe me, gentlemen, the moſt diſaffected ſubjects in England are not more unwilling to pay any tax or impoſition you lay upon them, than I am to receive it. God knows, I do not long more for any bleſſing in the world, than that I may live to call a parliament, and not aſk or receive any money from them. I will do all I can to ſee that happy day. I know the vaſt burthens this kingdom hath borne theſe laſt twenty years and more; that it is exceedingly impoveriſhed: but alas! what good will that which is left do them, if the government cannot be ſupported. I muſt deal plainly with you, and I do but diſcharge my conſcience in that plainneſs: if you do not, beſides the improving my revenue in the manner I have recommended to you, give me ſome preſent ſupply of money, to enable me to ſtruggle with thoſe difficulties I am preſſed with, I ſhall have a very melancholy ſummer, and ſhall much apprehend the public quiet; for you have heard, I preſume, of the late deſign in Ireland, for the ſurprize of the caſtle of Dublin, which was ſpread all over that kingdom, and many parliament-men engaged in it. There is an abſolute neceſſity, that I forthwith ſend over a ſum of money for the payment of the army, and putting the garriſons there in good order: you will not doubt but that thoſe ſeditious perſons had a correſpondence with their friends here; and I pray, let us not be too careleſs of them."

" I aſſure

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convocation, having alſo teſtified their affection for his majeſty by a ſimilar grant of four ſubſidies, it was readily confirmed by parliament. The commons alſo prepared three other acts for rendering their former aſſignments to the crown of the duty of exciſe, and of the revenue ariſing by hearth-money, more productive. But though, while the impreſſions of the king's ſpeech were freſh upon their minds, the vote of ſubſidies, and other bills to increaſe his majeſty's revenue, and to ſtrengthen his power, were carried through with the utmoſt

"I aſſure you that I have ſo great an occaſion for money, which my revenue cannot ſupply me with, that I every day omit the doing ſomewhat that is very neceſſary for the public benefit. Theſe ſure are as juſt motives to perſuade you to give me a ſupply as ever moved a houſe of commons; and therefore I conjure you to go chearfully about it, and let me not be diſappointed in my confidence of your affections; and, I pray, remember the ſeaſon of the year, and how neceſſary it is we make a receſs at, or about midſummer.

"I do pray heartily that the effect of this day's converſation may be the renewing our confidence in each other, and raiſing our joint reputation, which will be the ſtrongeſt ſecurity, with God's bleſſing, the kingdom can have for its peace, plenty, and proſperity; and upon my word, you ſhall have great comfort in what you do for me."

Nothing can throw a fuller light on the beauties of this ſpeech than a little recollection of the unprecedented extravagance of parliament in their former grants, and of the immenſe ſums which Charles received from ſo many other quarters, particularly from his grand pay-maſter, the king of France. Yet, poor man! he wanted money for no other purpoſe than to preſerve the nation from civil confuſion and foreign diſgrace!

diſpatch;

diſpatch; yet they ſoon abated of that alacrity, and all matters depending proceeded with unuſual flowneſs. This did not ariſe from any diminution of zeal in the king's ſervice, but rather from the exceſſive officiouſneſs of ſome new members, to whom his majeſty had transferred a great part of his confidence, and who, by their ignorance, or their intrigues, puzzled and impeded, inſtead of accelerating the progreſs of public affairs. I have before hinted at the changes made in his majeſty's council, and in the management of the houſe of commons; and ſhall now explain the cauſes and effects of ſuch alterations.

Changes in the cabinet, and in the management of the houſe of commons.

In the courſe of almoſt three years, ſince this parliament was firſt aſſembled, many members of the houſe of commons had died; and great pains were taken to have ſome of the king's menial ſervants choſen in their places. Hence it happened that there was a very great number of men in all ſtations in the court, as well below ſtairs as above, who were become members of parliament; and there were very few of them, who did not think themſelves qualified to reform whatſoever was amiſs in church or ſtate, and to procure whatſoever ſupply the king would require. They, who from the lowneſs of their former rank in his ſervice, never before had preſumed to ſpeak to him, now, by the privilege of parliament, reſorted to him every day, and had as much conference with

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him as they desired. They even took the liberty to give their opinions and advice on the conduct of his affairs; and represented such and such men, whom they liked, as well affected to his service, and others of much greater merit, but who paid them less respect, as ill affected, and as wanting duty to his majesty. Availing themselves of the king's weakness in too easily believing such insinuations, they brought the persons, of whom they had spoken favourably, and whose great recommendation consisted in a professed readiness to do any thing his majesty pleased to prescribe, to receive his thanks, as well as immediate directions from himself how to behave in the house, though many of them were in reality capable of no other instruction than to follow the example of some discreet man in whatsoever he should vote.

Till this time the king had been content to refer the direction of his affairs in parliament to the chancellor and those other members of the select committee, of whom I have already made frequent mention. They conferred every day with some members of the greatest talents and interest in the commons; and settled with them in what manner to proceed in managing the house, and what parts to assign to other men, whom they found willing to concur in what was to be desired; and all this was done without noise, or scandal. But there were two persons now introduced to act upon that stage,

ſtage, who diſdained to receive orders, or to have any method preſcribed to them;—who took upon them to judge of other men's defects, and thought their own abilities beyond exception.

Character and riſe of ſir Henry Bennet.

The firſt of thoſe new performers on the political theatre was ſir Harry Bennet, who had reſided for ſome time as his majeſty's agent, or, envoy at Madrid; and who, ſince the reſtoration, had obtained his recal, as hoping by means of the king's favour and his own dexterity to make a more rapid fortune at home than he could in a foreign country. He always profeſſed great reſpect for the chancellor, with whom he was obliged, while abroad, to correſpond, and by whom his inſtructions were regularly drawn, though whatever orders he received, and how poſitive ſoever, he obſerved ſo far, and not farther than his own humour diſpoſed him. Even during this formal correſpondence with the chancellor, he held a more ſecret intelligence with Daniel O'Neale of the bedchamber, by whoſe means he obtained the king's conſent to many particulars which he himſelf adviſed, without the privity of the chancellor, or either of the ſecretaries of ſtate. He had renewed the treaty with Spain, without their being once conſulted; nor did they know any thing of his having left Madrid, till they heard that he was in Paris, from whence he arrived in London in a very ſhort time after. He was well received by the king, in whoſe

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affections he had a very good place; and ſhortly after his arrival, his majeſty conferred upon him the only office then vacant, which was that of privy purſe; and admitted him into a great familiarity, and to the nightly meeting of favourites at lady Caſtlemaine's, where he filled a principal place to all intents and purpoſes. His diſcourſe was always enlivened with ready wit and pleaſantry; and he could alſo throw into it a great deal of that laſcivious ſeaſoning, which was the higheſt treat at thoſe converſations. In politics he flattered the king's wiſhes, and paid his court to the lady with equal addreſs; and, with regard to religion, if he had any, it was ſuppoſed to be a leaning towards popery*. By the diſplay of theſe accompliſhments

* There is no doubt but he was one of the few intruſted with the grand ſecret of the king's being a papiſt. Beſides a great variety of preſumptive proofs, we meet with the cleareſt evidence of it in Carte's life of the duke of Ormond, where he mentions a difference of opinion between Bennet, and the earl of Briſtol, when they were with the king in Flanders, on the policy of his majeſty's openly declaring himſelf a Roman catholic, after having embraced that religion. Bennet thought, that ſuch a public avowal of his faith was the only thing that could induce France and Spain to concur with all their powers in reſtoring him to his throne. But the earl aſſerted, on the contrary, that ſo imprudent a declaration would have no other effect than that of ruining the king's affairs in his own country, while no dependence or ſtreſs could be laid on the mighty promiſes of France and Spain, "who," he ſaid, "would give more to get one frontier garriſon into their hands, than to get the catholic religion

ments he made himſelf ſo agreeable, and was thought ſo uſeful, that the king deſired the chancellor to uſe his credit to get ſir Harry elected a member of the houſe of commons, which was accordingly done upon the firſt opportunity.

William Coventry's appearance on the political theatre.

The other perſon now brought forward was Mr. William Coventry, the youngeſt ſon of the late lord Coventry, who had been many years lord keeper of the great ſeal. This gentleman, towards the cloſe of the civil war, had the command of a company of foot, and ſhortly after travelled into France, where he remained whilſt there was any hope of getting another army for the king, or that either of the other crowns would engage in his quarrel. But when all thoughts of that were deſperate, he returned to England, and gave up every idea of any farther attempt, till the king was proclaimed in London. He then went over with others to offer his ſervice to his majeſty at the Hague, and had the good fortune to find the duke of York without a ſecretary. He was therefore received into that employment, which, as the duke held the office of high admiral of England, was not only very honourable, but almoſt as lucrative

gion eſtabliſhed, not only in England, but all over Europe." The earl's arguments prevailed; and Charles continued to wear, at leaſt in public, the maſk of hypocriſy ever after.

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as that of ſecretary of ſtate. He was a ſullen, ill-natured, proud man, whoſe ambition had no limits: his parts were very good, if he had not thought them better than any other man's; and he had diligence and induſtry, which men of good parts are too often without, which made him quickly to have at leaſt credit and power enough with the duke. He had a ſeat in the houſe of commons from the beginning of the parliament: he always ſpoke pertinently, and was well attended to: he was, in like manner, one of thoſe, with whom the perſons truſted by the king in conducting his affairs in the lower houſe conſulted very frequently. But perceiving that the advice of ſome few others, who had much longer experience, was more relied upon than his, he began to think himſelf not valued enough, and only made uſe of to promote the deſigns and contrivances of other men, without being ſignal in the management, to which he aſpired. This determined him to make frequent experiments how far he himſelf could prevail in the houſe, by declining the method that was preſcribed, and propoſing ſomewhat which was either beſide, or contrary to it. Then if it ſucceeded, as it ſometimes did, the reſt of the court party not oppoſing him, from a belief of his having received newer directions, he had argument enough to cenſure the chancellor for having formed wrong ideas of the temper and affections of the houſe.

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When thoſe two perſons, ſir Harry Bennet and Mr. Coventry, (who had entered into as great a league of friendſhip as can ſubſiſt between two very proud men) came to ſit together in the houſe of commons, though the former of them knew no more of the conſtitution and laws of England, than he did of China, nor had in truth a care or tenderneſs for church or ſtate, but believed France was the beſt pattern in the world, they thought it would be doing them the greateſt wrong, if they were not allowed entirely to govern the houſe, or if the king took his meaſures of what ſhould be done there from any body but themſelves. They made friendſhips with ſeveral young members, who ſpoke confidently, and often ſeemed to have credit in the houſe. As theſe were for the moſt part country gentlemen of ordinary condition, and mean fortunes, they were deſirous to ſecure the intereſt of ſuch a perſon as ſir Harry Bennet, who was thought to have, and who indeed had conſiderable influence with his majeſty.

League of friendſhip between thoſe two favourites.

Sir Harry, proud of having gained ſuch a number of adherents, fancied he underſtood the houſe, and what was to be done there, as well as any man in England. He recommended thoſe men to the king, as perſons of ſublime parts; ſpoke in their own hearing of the ſervices they had done, and how much greater they could do; and aſſured his majeſty, that with ſuch loyal and zealous ſupporters

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he might carry what he would in the houſe of commons. The king received and conferred with them very graciouſly, and diſmiſſed them with promiſes which made them rich already. They had before been entirely governed by ſir Hugh Pollard, under the chancellor's ſecret direction; but they thought they had now got a better patron: the new courtier had raiſed their value, and talked to them of recompences and rewards in a different dialect from what they had been accuſtomed to.

Profits of the poſt-office, and wine-licenſes granted to the duke of York and his heirs.

The two friends before-mentioned agreed ſo well between themſelves, that whether they ſpoke together, or apart to the king, they always ſaid the ſame things, gave the ſame information, and took care that both their maſters might have the ſame opinions and judgments of the affections of the houſe of commons, which they ſaid were ſo great and united, as to be ready to do whatſoever the king, or duke could require. They had it in their power to give the latter more eſpecially a ſtrong inſtance of the ſeeming truth of their aſſertions. About the beginning of the ſeſſion, ſome abuſes in contracts with relation to the poſt-office having been complained of, the commons requeſted the king to make no farther grants of that kind, till the matter could be more fully inquired into. But by the contrivance of Coventry and Bennet, the houſe ſome time after unanimouſly aſſented to a motion for ſettling the profits of the poſt-office, and

and the power of granting wine-licenſes, on his royal highneſs the duke of York, and the heirs male of his body. This was a very acceptable piece of ſervice, as ſo great an addition to the duke's eſtabliſhment* enabled him to keep a ſeparate court, without troubling the king for any farther aſſiſtance.

Introduction of three new members at the ſelect meetings.

Such a proof of the ſentiments and liberality of the commons afforded an excellent ſubject for ſir Harry and Mr. Coventry to enlarge upon. They ſaid, "that former delays in matters which the king had at heart were entirely owing to miſmanagement: they knew many worthy and able men, of whoſe wiſdom the houſe was ſo well perſuaded, as to agree to whatever they propoſed; and yet theſe men complained that they had no directions given to them, which way they might beſt ſerve the king." They farther aſſerted, "that if thoſe men were properly treated with, it would quickly appear how much they were at his majeſty's diſpoſal; and all things, which now depended long, would be hereafter diſpatched in half the time."

The king wondered very much, that any members of the houſe, who were ſo well diſpoſed to ſerve him, ſhould have been ſo much neglected;

* The revenue of the poſt-office alone afforded at that time a clear income of twenty-one thouſand pounds a year.

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and wiſhed ſir Harry and Mr. Coventry to ſpeak to the chancellor on the ſubject. They artfully concealed their having the leaſt prejudice againſt the chancellor, (though they were not united in any one thing more than the deſire of his ruin) and ſaid they would very willingly repair to him, and be directed by him; but they requeſted, that his majeſty himſelf would firſt ſpeak to him to call thoſe perſons, whom they had recommended, to meet together with the reſt, whom the chancellor uſed to conſult. This the king willingly undertook, and being ſhortly after waited upon by the chancellor, his majeſty mentioned what had been told him, and named ſeveral members of the houſe of commons, who, he ſaid, took it ill, that they were not particularly informed of the king's wiſhes, and which way they might beſt ſerve him. He therefore deſired that, at the next conference upon parliamentary buſineſs, thoſe gentlemen, with ſir Harry Bennet, might have notice to be preſent. As to Mr. William Coventry, he and his brother Harry of the bedchamber had been conſtantly in thoſe councils.

It was not difficult for the chancellor to perceive the ſecret deſign of thoſe meaſures which had been ſuggeſted to the king. He ſaid, "that great and notorious meetings in parliament had been always odious; and though they might produce ſucceſs in a few particulars, they commonly ended unluckily:

luckily: that ſince his majeſty's return, care had been taken to confine the management of his buſineſs in the commons to a few perſons, who had a mutual confidence in each other, and by whoſe means inſtructions were communicated, without noiſe and without notice, to ſuch of the members as were willing to be inſtruments towards procuring what was deſirable, and preventing what might be unpleaſant to his majeſty: that the very gentlemen, whom his majeſty had named, had always received every neceſſary advice and information of his pleaſure, without being expoſed by any numerous meetings to thoſe ſuſpicions and reproaches, which in all parliaments had been looked upon as a diſgrace: and laſtly, that he could not conceal his own fears, that putting the buſineſs into a wider and more open channel, and his majeſty's too publicly ſpeaking with the members, and believing the reports of every man, who was preſent at the debates, would be attended with ſome inconveniences not eaſy to be remedied *." The king did not expreſs any diſſatisfaction at this diſcourſe, but ſeemed to approve it. However he would have ſir Harry Bennet, and two of the other gentlemen, Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Churchill, called to the next meeting; and becauſe they were to

* By theſe remarks we may ſee, that ſome of the miniſters of Charles II. were almoſt as well ſkilled in the arts of *decent corruption*, as Walpole himſelf, or any of his modern imitators.

be

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be introduced into company they had not uſed to converſe with, his majeſty deſired that the ſelect party might meet at the chancellor's, and not at the chief baron Bridgeman's, or the attorney-general's chambers, the former places of reſort; and that the chancellor ſhould let the reſt know the good opinion his majeſty had of thoſe, who were added to the number.

Decline of the Chancellor's power.

By theſe means, and with theſe circumſtances, this alteration was made in the conduct of the king's ſervice in parliament, upon which many other alterations followed, though not at once. It ſoon appeared, that the introduction of new confidents was not pleaſing to thoſe, who thought they had very well diſcharged their truſt. The old members became more reſerved in the delivery of their opinions, and ſome of them always diſcontinued their attendance at the meetings. The new comers, on the other hand, knowing their credit with the king, and preſuming on the ſuperiority of their talents, came rather to dictate than adviſe; ſo that by degrees there were leſs reſolutions taken than had been formerly, nor was there ſo chearful a concurrence, or ſo ſpeedy a diſpatch of the buſineſs depending in the houſe, as before. The chancellor felt very ſenſibly the diminution of his own power; and knew very well to what cauſes it was owing, though both ſir Harry Bennet and Mr. William Coventry carried themſelves towards him with

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with great civility and outward reſpect, while neither of them let ſlip any opportunity of injuring him in private. Still, however, they acted with great warineſs and caution; and even among their parties they ſpoke of his foibles rather with an air of pleaſantry and ridicule, than with any ſhew of enmity or ill-nature.

The earl of Briſtol's raſh and malicious attempt.

Another of the junto, who privately conſpired the chancellor's ruin, was not quite ſo diſcreet, or rather ſo patient to wait for a favourable opportunity of effecting his deſtruction. This was the earl of Briſtol, who had been croſſed in many of his ſchemes by the chancellor, and who aſcribed to him every check that was impoſed on his own moſt extravagant pretenſions. Though the king had been often very liberal to him, at one time making him a preſent of ten thouſand pounds in money, with which he purchaſed Wimbleton of the queen-mother, and at another time giving him Aſhdown foreſt and other lands in Suſſex, yet theſe marks of royal favour were not ſufficient to gratify his pride, or his avarice. His religion kept him from any poſt of conſiderable honour, or emolument; and his family eſtate had been ſold and ſettled by his own conſent upon the marriage of his eldeſt ſon twice to great fortunes; ſo that, when he returned from beyond the ſeas, he had little more to ſubſiſt upon than the king's bounty; and though no man taſted more of it, yet he always

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ways thought the chancellor prevented its being poured out upon him in greater meaſure. He was in his nature very covetous, and ready to embrace all ways of getting money; but, with an inconſiſtency very common to proud men, he was nothing provident in his expences, when he had any temptation from ambition or vanity. He ſpent as much in building and gardening at Wimbleton as the land was worth; and to add to his frequent diſtreſſes, he had an unconquerable paſſion for gaming, in which he had no ſkill, but conſtantly loſt all the money he ever could command.

By ſuch imprudent conduct the earl found himſelf in ſtreights, which he could neither endure, nor get out of, and which tranſported him to ſuch a degree, that he reſolved to treat the king in a very different manner from what he had ever yet preſumed to do. Upon this determination, he immediately went to the king, and finding only lord Aubigny in his company, with whom the earl was upon a footing of the greateſt intimacy, he ſtated his wants, and made a requeſt ſo very unreaſonable that it could not be complied with. He then told his majeſty, "that he knew well the cauſe of his withdrawing his favour from him: that it proceeded ſolely from the chancellor, who governed him and managed all his affairs, whilſt he himſelf ſpent his time only in pleaſures and debauchery." He went on in the ſame paſſionate ſtrain,

ſtrain, upbraiding the king with many exceſſes, to which no man had contributed more than the earl himſelf; and uttering many harſh truths, which came with a worſe grace from his lips. He concluded, "that if his requeſt was not granted in four and twenty hours, he would do ſomewhat that would awaken the king out of his ſlumber, and make him look better to his own buſineſs;" adding many threats againſt the chancellor. So violent and daring an attack deprived the king of all preſence of mind; and he afterwards reproached himſelf for not having called his guard, and ſent the earl to the Tower *.

A report was quickly ſpread through the court and the town, that the earl of Briſtol would accuſe the chancellor of high-treaſon; and the earl did not fail to realize his menaces. When the time was paſt, that he preſcribed to the king to give him ſatisfaction, he came to the houſe of lords with a paper in his hand, and told them, "that he could not but obſerve, that, after ſo glorious a return, with which God had bleſſed the king and the nation, all the world had expected, that the proſpe-

* It is very probable that the king had ſome ſtronger reaſons for not taking this ſtep, than the pretence of his momentary confuſion. The earl was privy to ſome ſecrets, the diſcovery of which, at this juncture, might have ſhaken the hypocritical tyrant from his throne. This made the latter as timid as the former was inſolent and audacious.

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rity of the kingdom would have far exceeded the misery and adversity which it had for many years endured; and that the parliament, on their part, had left nothing undone to promote so happy and desirable a change; notwithstanding all which it was evident to all men, and lamented by those who wished well to his majesty, that his affairs grew every day worse and worse, and that the king himself lost much of his honour, and of the affection he had in the hearts of his people: that, for his part, he looked upon it with as much sadness as any man, and had made enquiry as well as he could from whence this great misfortune, which every body was sensible of, could proceed; and that he was satisfied in his own conscience, that it proceeded principally from the power and credit, and sole credit of the chancellor; and therefore he was resolved, for the good of his country, to accuse the lord high chancellor of high-treason, which," he added, "he had done in the paper now submitted to their lordships, all written with his own hand, and subscribed with his name" He then desired the paper might be read: it contained many articles of supposed treason and other misdemeanours, the chief of which consisted in charging the chancellor with having endeavoured to alienate the affections of his majesty's subjects, by insinuating that the king was a papist; with sowing dissentions between the king and his brother; with striving to raise his own reputation and popularity on the ruins

ruins of the royal character: and with aſſuming to himſelf the government of all public affairs, which he had adminiſtered unſkilfully, corruptly, and traiterouſly. Moſt of the other charges were frivolous, or malicious, and evidently deſigned to wound the king through the chancellor*.

As

* The ſpecific charges exhibited againſt the chancellor by the earl were to this effect:

" That he had endeavoured to alienate the hearts of his majeſty's ſubjects, by artificially inſinuating to his creatures and dependents, that his majeſty was inclined to popery, and deſigned to alter the eſtabliſhed religion:

" He had ſaid to ſeveral perſons of his majeſty's privy council, that his majeſty was dangerouſly corrupted in his religion, and inclined to popery; and that perſons of that religion had ſuch acceſs and ſuch credit with him, that unleſs there were a careful eye had unto it, the proteſtant religion would be overthrown in this kingdom:

" Upon his majeſty's admitting ſir Henry Bennet to be ſecretary of ſtate, in the place of ſir Edward Nicholas, he ſaid, that his majeſty had given ten thouſand pounds to remove a zealous proteſtant, that he might bring into that place of high truſt a concealed papiſt:

" In purſuance of the ſame traiterous deſign, ſeveral friends and dependents of his had ſaid aloud, that were it not for my lord chancellor's ſtanding in the gap, popery would be introduced into this kingdom:

" That he had perſuaded the king, contrary to his reaſon, to allow his name to be uſed to the pope and to ſeveral cardinals, in the ſolicitation of a cardinal's cap for the lord Aubigny, great almoner to the queen; in order to effect which, he had employed Mr. Richard Bealing, a known papiſt, and had likewiſe applied himſelf to ſeveral popiſh prieſts and jeſuits for the ſame

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As ſoon as the paper was read, the chancellor roſe, and without any trouble in his countenance, ſaid, " that he had had the honour heretofore to have

purpoſe, promiſing great favour to the prieſts here, in caſe it ſhould be effected:

" That he had likewiſe promiſed to ſeveral papiſts, he would do his endeavour; and ſaid, he hoped to compaſs the taking away all penal laws againſt them; to the end they might preſume and grow vain upon his patronage, and, by their publiſhing their hopes of a toleration, increaſe the ſcandal endeavoured by him to be raiſed throughout the kingdom:

" That being intruſted with the treaty betwixt his majeſty, and the royal conſort, the queen, he concluded it upon articles ſcandalous and dangerous to the proteſtant religion: moreover he brought the king and queen together, without any ſettled agreement about the performance of the marriage-rites, whereby the queen refuſing to be married by a proteſtant prieſt, in caſe of her being with child, either the ſucceſſion ſhould be made uncertain for want of due rites of matrimony, or elſe his majeſty be expoſed to a ſuſpicion of his being married in his own dominions by a Romiſh prieſt:

" That having endeavoured to alienate the affections of the king's ſubjects, upon the ſcore of religion, he made uſe of all malicious ſcandals and jealouſies to raiſe to himſelf a popular applauſe of being the zealous upholder of the proteſtant religion:

" That he farther endeavoured to alienate the affections of the king's ſubjects, by venting in his own diſcourſes, and in thoſe of his emiſſaries, opprobrious ſcandals againſt his majeſty's perſon and courſe of life, ſuch as were not fit to be mentioned, unleſs neceſſity ſhould require it:

" That he endeavoured to alienate the affection of the duke of York from his majeſty, by ſuggeſting to him, that his majeſty intended to legitimate the duke of Monmouth:

" That

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have ſo much the good opinion and friendſhip of the noble earl, that he durſt appeal to his own conſcience, that he did not himſelf believe one of thoſe articles to be true, but knew the contrary of moſt of them." He then ſpoke at large to the ſeveral charges, not only to ſhew the impoſſibility of their being founded in truth, but that they re-

"That he had perſuaded the king, againſt the advice of the lord general, to withdraw the Engliſh garriſons out of Scotland, and demoliſh all the forts built there at ſo vaſt a charge to this kingdom; and all without expecting the advice of the parliament of England:

"That he endeavoured to alienate his majeſty's affections and eſteem for his preſent parliament, by telling him, that there never was ſo weak and inconſiderable a houſe of lords, nor ever ſo weak and heady a houſe of commons; and particularly, that it was better to ſell Dunkirk, than to be at their mercy for want of money:

"That, contrary to a known law made laſt ſeſſions, by which money was given and applied for the maintaining of Dunkirk, he adviſed and effected the ſale of the ſame to the French king:

"That he had, contrary to law, enriched himſelf and his creatures by the ſale of offices:

"That he had converted to his own uſe vaſt ſums of public money raiſed in Ireland by way of ſubſidy, private and public benevolences, and otherwiſe given and intended to defray the charge of the government in that kingdom:

"That having arrogated to himſelf a ſupreme direction of all his majeſty's affairs, he had prevailed to have his majeſty's cuſtoms farmed at a lower rate than others offered, and that by perſons with ſome of whom he went a ſhare; and had enriched himſelf in various other inſtances to the injury of his majeſty's revenues."

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flected more upon the king's honour than upon his. The chancellor concluded with saying, "he was sorry the noble earl had not been better advised; for he did believe, that, though all that was alledged in the articles should be true, they would not all amount to high-treason;" and desired that the judges might be required to deliver their opinion upon that point. To this the house very readily agreed, ordering the judges to consider the articles, and to give their opinion next day. It was also moved by one of the lords, that a copy of the articles might be sent to the king, as his majesty was so presumptuously mentioned in them; which was likewise agreed; and the articles were delivered to the lord chamberlain to present to the king.

Next morning the lord chamberlain informed the house, "that he was commanded by the king, to thank them for the respect they had shewn his majesty, in sending those articles to him; and to let them know, that he looked upon them as a libel upon himself*, more than a charge upon the chancellor, who, upon his knowledge, was innocent in all the particulars charged upon him."

* Most of the insinuations, as far as they respected the king's sentiments, were, indeed, strictly true; though the earl of Bristol, by ascribing them to the chancellor, affected to represent them as treasonable slanders.

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The judges at the ſame time declared their unanimous opinion, firſt, "that an accuſation of high treaſon could not be originally exhibited by one peer againſt another in the houſe of peers; therefore the charge was not regularly and legally brought in; and ſecondly, that if the matters alledged were true, they did not amount to treaſon, as was aſſerted in the charge."

The meſſage from his majeſty, and the declaration of the judges threw the earl of Briſtol into great confuſion. He lamented his condition, "that he, for endeavouring to ſerve his country, from the impulſe of his conſcience, was diſcountenanced and threatened with the anger and diſpleaſure of his prince, whilſt his adverſary kept his place in the houſe, and had the judges ſo much at his devotion, that they would not certify againſt him." The chancellor then moved the houſe, "that a ſhort day might be given to the earl to bring in his evidence to prove the ſeveral matters of his charge; otherwiſe that he might have ſuch reparation, as was in their judgments proportionable to the indignity." The earl ſaid, "he ſhould not fail to prove all he had alledged and more; but that he could not appoint a time, when he could be ready for a hearing, becauſe many of his moſt important witneſſes were beyond the ſeas, ſome at Paris, and others in other places; and that he muſt examine the duke of Ormond, who

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was lieutenant in Ireland, and the earl of Lauderdale who was then in Scotland, and muſt deſire commiſſions to that purpoſe." But from that day he made no farther inſtance; and underſtanding that the king had given warrants to a ſerjeant at arms to apprehend him, he abſconded for ſome time, ſending letters and petitions by his wife to the king, who would not receive them. At length his majeſty was prevailed upon by lady Caſtlemaine and ſir Harry Bennet to ſee him in private; but never ſhewed him any public countenance till the chancellor's misfortune, when the earl came to the court and to parliament in great triumph, and boaſted of enjoying a greater ſhare than before of the king's familiarity and confidence.

Curious intrigues to effect the removal of ſecretary Nicholas.

There was one of the articles in the charge againſt the chancellor, which took its riſe from the ſolicited reſignation of ſecretary Nicholas, and the appointment of ſir Harry Bennet to that high office. As this alteration ſoon produced a variety of other changes at court, and led the way to the total diſmiſſion of the chancellor and his party, I ſhall here relate the circumſtances attending it. Sir Harry, though appointed keeper of the privy purſe, did not think himſelf preferred to a ſtation worthy of his merit and great qualifications. The king had made him ſome flattering promiſes at Fontarabia, whither he attended the Spaniſh miniſter to meet his majeſty, and to ſtrengthen himſelf in his good graces.

graces. Since his return to England, he had been uncommonly ſucceſsful in making a farther progreſs in his majeſty's affections. There was no man for whom the king ſhewed more kindneſs, or whoſe company he more delighted in. He had alſo ſecured the lady's favour; and his old friend Mr. O'Neale was ſtill ready to put his majeſty in mind of all his ſervices; ſo that the only difficulty was to find a vacancy, that might give opportunity for his advancement. CHAP. I. 1663.

It was impoſſible, that ſir Harry could have a better friend near the king's perſon than Mr. O'Neale, or any man more dexterous in making opportunities, which he could not find. He made no ſcruple to inſinuate to the king, that the abilities of neither of his ſecretaries were ſo great, but that he might be better ſerved. He knew very well that his majeſty was not fond of old men; and had not ſo much eſteem of them, as their parts, induſtry, and integrity deſerved; and that he would not have been ſorry, if either, or both of them had died. But it would have been an ungracious thing to diſmiſs either, merely becauſe they had lived too long. Secretary Nicholas had ſerved the late king in the ſame function with great fidelity; and having very much impaired his fortune by his attachment to the royal cauſe, he returned from exile with his preſent majeſty, in the hope of

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repairing paſt loſſes by the juſt perquiſites of his office. He was, indeed, ſome years above ſeventy; but being well verſed in buſineſs, and all the forms of diſpatch, he ſupplied by his induſtry and expertneſs the want of youth and of ſhining talents. The other ſecretary was ſir William Morrice, general Monk's kinſman and great confidant, who alone was entruſted with the correſpondence between him and the king; and who, having obtained his preſent place by the general's ſpecial recommendation, could not be turned out without the groſſeſt affront to his friend and patron. The only expedient, therefore, to provide for ſir Harry Bennet was to remove ſecretary Nicholas by his own conſent; and to this the king was the more eaſily perſuaded, becauſe it would give him an opportunity to bring another perſon into the office of the privy purſe, of whom he was lately grown very fond, though when he came into England, he had a greater averſion to him than to any gentleman, who had been abroad with his majeſty. This was ſir Charles Berkeley, then captain of the duke of York's guard, and much in the good graces of his royal highneſs. I have in a former part taken notice of his enmity to the chancellor, and of his entire devotion to the queen-mother's intriguing deſigns *.

* See page 150, vol. I.

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Whilſt this ſcheme of new promotions was contriving and depending, great care was taken that it might not come to the notice of the chancellor, leſt, if he could not divert the king from deſiring it, he might diſſuade his old friend ſecretary Nicholas from hearkening to any ſuch propoſal, or accepting any compoſition. This, they thought, he would exert all his influence to effect, as well to keep a man in, whom he could entirely manage, as to keep another out, of whom he had reaſon to be jealous. O'Neale, who had always the ſkill to bring that to paſs by others, which he could not barefacedly appear in himſelf, inſinuated to Mr. Aſhburnham, a friend of the ſecretary's, "that the king thought the ſecretary too old to take ſo much pains, and often wiſhed that his friends would perſuade him to retire, that there might be a younger man in the office, who could attend upon his majeſty at all hours, and in all journies; but that his majeſty always ſpoke kindly of him, and as if he reſolved to give him an ample recompence." O'Neale added, as a great ſecret, that the king had an impatient deſire to have ſir Harry Bennet ſecretary of ſtate.

Aſhburnham was well verſed in the artifices of court too; and thought he might very well perform an office of kindneſs to his old confidant, and at the ſame time find a new and more uſeful friend for himſelf, by having a hand in procuring a large

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a large satisfaction for the old, and likewise facilitating the way for the introduction of a new secretary, who could not forget the obligation. He told O'Neale, "that all the world knew his long and sincere friendship for secretary Nicholas;" [They had been both servants at the same time to the duke of Buckingham, when he was killed.] "and that he should be much troubled to see him displaced in his old age with contempt: but, if his majesty would dismiss him with honour and reward, so as to enable him to provide for his wife and children, he would not hesitate to persuade him to quit his employment. O'Neale had all he looked for; and only repeated his injunction of secrecy, "lest," he said, "it might come to the king's ear, that he had communicated this to any man; and he did presume, that before any resolution was taken in it, his majesty would speak of it to the chancellor."

Within a day or two the king sent for Ashburnham and told him, "he knew he was a friend to the secretary, who was now grown old and not able to take the pains he had done; that he had served his father and himself very faithfully, and had spent his fortune in his service; that if he were willing to retire, he would give him ten thousand pounds, or any other recompence he should chuse," implying a title of honour; but intimated, though he referred all to his own will, that he wished,

wiſhed, and that it would be acceptable, that the office might be vacant, and at his majeſty's diſpoſal. Aſhburnham undertook the employment very chearfully, and quickly imparted what the king had ſaid, and all that he himſelf knew before, to the ſecretary, who was not fond of the court, and thought he had lived long enough there. The ſecretary alſo conſidered, that though the king's meſſage was very gracious, and offered a noble reward, it did withal appear, that his majeſty deſired he ſhould be gone, and that having deſigned a ſucceſſor, who had already much credit with his majeſty, if he himſelf ſhould ſeem ſullen, or unwilling, he might in a ſhort time be put out without any conſideration, or at moſt with the promiſe of one. Hereupon he wiſhed his friend to aſſure the king, "that he would very readily do whatſoever his majeſty thought neceſſary for his ſervice; but he hoped, that after above forty years ſpent in the ſervice of the crown, he ſhould not be expoſed to diſgrace and contempt: that he had a wife and children, who had all ſuffered with him in exile, till his majeſty's return, and for whom he could not make a competent proviſion, without his majeſty's bounty; and therefore he hoped, that, before his majeſty required the ſignet, he would cauſe the recompence to be more than what was mentioned, and to be *firſt paid* *."

* The old ſecretary knew the king too well to truſt to his promiſes.

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The buſineſs could not be put into better hands, for it was managed by Aſhburnham with notable ſkill. As ſoon as it was known that the ſecretary would willingly reſign, (which was feared) and that only a better recompence was expected, all the party were killing that the king ſhould make the act look as graciouſly as might be, that the ſucceſſor might be attended with the leſs envy; and Aſhburnham cultivated their impatience ſo cunningly, that it coſt the king in preſent money, and land or leaſe, very little leſs than twenty thouſand, all which the old ſecretary received before he reſigned his place. Thus ſir Harry Bennet was, at the king's charge, accommodated even to the ſatisfaction of his own ambition; and his majeſty was as well pleaſed both in having procured him the object of his wiſhes, and in being thereby enabled to bring into the other office near his own perſon ſir Charles Berkeley, whom he every day loved with more paſſion, for what reaſon no man knew, nor could imagine.

From this time, every cloſe obſerver could not but diſcern, that the chancellor's influence with the king manifeſtly declined. Inconvenient grants came every day to the ſeals, for the benefit of particular perſons; and when the chancellor ſtated any objections, though his majeſty ſeemed to hear him as willingly as ever, he had always ſome reaſons for perſiſting in his firſt reſolution to have the grants paſſed.

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paſſed. It was alſo well known, that in the evening converſations at lady Caſtlemaine's greater liberties were taken than uſual in ſpeaking of public affairs, and of the chancellor's conduct; and what before was mentioned only as a jeſt, or with an air of pleaſantry, became now an object of ſerious cenſure. However, there appeared nothing of diſunion as yet in the meetings of the ſelect committee; and the ſhew at leaſt of a fameneſs of opinion in all matters relating to the king was kept up. In parliament, as I have already hinted, buſineſs went on more tardily; not that the number of perſons devoted to the court was leſſened; but upon any debate, they ſeemed to be guided by different inſtructions. Sir Harry Bennet, never ſpoke, nor ever was likely to ſpeak in the houſe of commons, except in the ear of whoſoever ſat next to him; and yet that whiſper often produced more effect than the eloquent harangues of others. Mutual confidence in the ſervants of the crown was really loſt, while all profeſſed an equal zeal for his majeſty's intereſt.

National diſcontents.

But with whatever care any diviſions were avoided in council and in parliament, great murmurs and diſcontents broke out in the country, where the people began to talk with more freedom and leſs reverence of the court, and of the king himſelf; and to reproach the commons for their granting ſo much money, and increaſing taxes and impoſitions, without

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without having done any thing for the redreſs of public grievances. The ſcandalous corruption of manners, which, flowing from the court, as from a polluted ſource, had ſpread all over the land, afforded the diſſenting preachers matter enough for the ſevereſt invectives. As they themſelves ſmarted from the laſh of perſecution, they gratified their private reſentment in aſcribing the diſſoluteneſs of the times to the indolence, and irreligion of the eſtabliſhed clergy. The number of conventicles increaſed; and ſome of the ſermons delivered there were little ſhort of libels on the conduct of the legiſlature. The papiſts aſſumed ſtill greater liberties; and bragged as if they had a toleration, and cared not what the magiſtrates could do. The parliament had a deſire to correct both with the ſame rigour; but though there would have been a general conſent in any ſeverities that could be inflicted on the frequenters of conventicles, yet there could not be the like concurrence againſt the papiſts; and it was not poſſible to carry on the one without the other. The new leaders of the court-party therefore, that they might be ſure to prevent the latter, interrupted all that was propoſed againſt the former; and choſe to have neither, out of fear of both. This increaſed the diſorders in the country, and cauſed more reflections on the court.

Deluſive promiſes at the prorogation.

The ſummer being now very far advanced, and as much money obtained as could then be well drawn

drawn from the commons, the king, in order to prevent thoſe queſtions reſpecting the diſſenters and the papiſts from being farther agitated, reſolved to prorogue the parliament. He went to the houſe of peers on the twenty-ſeventh of July, and having paſſed the bills that were ready *, he ſent for the commons,

* Beſides the acts before-mentioned, another, which received the royal aſſent at this time, deſerves notice. It was entitled "an Act for the encouragement of trade," though one of its clauſes betrayed the groſſeſt ignorance of the principles not only of commerce, but of ſound policy. It prohibited the importation of foreign cattle. Such a prohibition, which was particularly levelled at Ireland, not only reduced the inhabitants of that country to the greateſt diſtreſs, by ſhutting them out from the only market they had for the chief article of their produce; but was highly injurious to the induſtry, the agriculture, and the manufactures of England. It cauſed a greater quantity of land here to be applied to the purpoſes of paſturage than is conſiſtent with the higher improvements of huſbandry in a populous and commercial iſland: it gave the Engliſh graziers all the advantages of a monopoly againſt their own countrymen; and as the Iriſh, who had no wealth but their cattle, were deprived of the means of ſupplying themſelves, as before, with the manufactures of England, this oppreſſive act, which was carried to a ſtill more pernicious extent by the parliament in 1666, put a ſtop to all trade between the two nations.

Mr. Carte, in his Life of the duke of Ormond, takes occaſion from this act to obſerve, "that the Engliſh never underſtood the art of governing their provinces; that they always treated them in ſuch a manner as either put them under the neceſſity, or ſubjected them to the temptation, of caſting off their government, whenever an opportunity offered: that it was a ſeries of this impolitic conduct which loſt them Normandy, Poictou, Anjou,

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commons, and thanked them for the preſent they had made to him of the four ſubſidies, "which," he told them, "he would not have received from them, if it were not abſolutely neceſſary for their peace and quiet, as well as his; and that it would yet do him very little good, if he did not improve it by good huſbandry, and by retrenching thoſe

Anjou, Guienne, and all the dominions which they formerly had in France: that in the king of France's *Tréſor de Chartres* there are an infinite number of appeals and memorials for grievances, which the inhabitants of the Engliſh provinces ſuffered from the Engliſh government: that, for theſe reaſons, they never appeared in arms to aſſiſt the Engliſh againſt the French, according to the obligation of their tenures; and whilſt one hundred thouſand vaſſals, under the like tenures, ſerved in the armies of France, the Engliſh were forced to fight their battles themſelves: that from an abhorrence to the Engliſh government, when Rochelle, Saintes, Angouleſme, and other towns in thoſe provinces ſubmitted to the kings of France, they took particular care to inſert in their capitulations, an expreſs article, *That in no diſtreſs of the affairs of France they ſhould ever be delivered back into the hands of the Engliſh.*"

Had Mr. Carte lived in our times, what a melancholy addition he might have made to his catalogue of provinces diſmembered from the Britiſh empire by the narrow and illiberal policy of its government! He would alſo have increaſed the number of his ſtinging remarks by aſſerting, that, even after the loſs of America, the conceſſions in favour of Ireland were not obtained from the generoſity, but extorted from the fears of its rulers. Theſe faults, however, are not peculiar to the Engliſh government, as Mr. Carte inſinuates. Moſt of the European ſtates, have not only been guilty of the ſame abſurd oppreſſions, but ſtill perſiſt in them contrary to the cleareſt precepts both of hiſtory and experience.

very

very expences, which in many reſpects might be thought neceſſary enough." When his majeſty touched upon this ſubject, he was too apt to forget the weakneſs of all his paſt reſolutions, and the vanity of his repeated promiſes of œconomy and reform. He now again aſſured them, "that they ſhould ſee, that he would rather impoſe upon himſelf than upon his ſubjects; and if all men would follow his example in retrenching their expences, (which poſſibly they might do with much more convenience than he could retrench his) the kingdom muſt in a ſhort time gain what they had given him that day." CHAP. I. 1663.

His majeſty then took notice of the diſcontents of the people, and of the licence in religion which he knew had been ſo much complained of. He ſaid, "he was very glad the members were going into their ſeveral counties, where their preſence would do much good; and he hoped their vigilance and authority would prevent thoſe diſturbances, which the reſtleſs ſpirits of ill and unquiet men would be always contriving, and of which he aſſured the parliament thoſe men promiſed themſelves ſome effects that ſummer; and that there had been more pains and unuſual ways taken to kindle the old fatal fears and jealouſies, than he thought he ſhould ever have lived to have ſeen, at leaſt to have ſeen ſo countenanced." He farther told them, "that he had expected to have had

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ſome bills preſented to him againſt the ſeveral diſtempers in religion, againſt ſeditious conventicles, and againſt the growth of popery; but that it might be they had been in ſome fear of reconciling thoſe contradictions in religion into ſome conſpiracy againſt the public peace, to which he himſelf doubted men of the moſt contradictory motives in conſcience were inclinable enough." He promiſed "to lay that buſineſs to heart, and the miſchiefs which might flow from thoſe licenſes; and that if he lived to meet his parliament again, as he hoped he ſhould, he would take care to preſent two bills to them to that end. In the mean time," he ſaid, "he had given it in charge to the judges, in their ſeveral circuits, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to prevent and puniſh the ſcandalous and ſeditious meetings of ſectaries, and to convict the papiſts; and he himſelf would take all the pains he could, that neither the one nor the other ſhould diſturb the peace of the kingdom." After adding many gracious expreſſions of his eſteem and confidence in both houſes, he cauſed them to be prorogued till the ſixteenth of March following.

Prevalence of the popiſh intereſt.

The king was in truth content enough that the parliament had not preſented to him any ſuch bills as he mentioned, which he well foreſaw would not have been agreeable to his wiſhes; for though he was ready to aſſent to the moſt rigorous acts againſt all the other factions in religion, he did not think the

the papiſts had deſerved the ſame ſeverities. The order given to the judges for convicting them, as well as puniſhing other non-conformiſts, and his majeſty's promiſe to prepare againſt the next meeting two bills to remedy the diſtempers in religion were entirely owing to the perſuaſions of the chancellor; but were ſoon retracted through the more powerful influence of contrary advice. He had repreſented to the king, how much his majeſty's goodneſs and condeſcenſion towards the catholics were abuſed by their very imprudent carriage; and that even ſome of their prieſts often urged it as an argument to thoſe whom they endeavoured to make proſelytes, that the king was of their religion in his heart, and would ſhortly declare it to all the world. The beſt way therefore, the chancellor ſaid, to ſilence and contradict ſuch ſcandals, and to reſtrain ſuch inſolence in future, would be to give the before-mentioned order to the judges, and to prepare a bill, which, without expoſing the papiſts to any notable inconveniences in their perſons, or their fortunes, if they behaved themſelves well and warily, might leſſen and limit the number of their prieſts, who upon miſſions reſorted hither as to an infidel nation; and might alſo remove the inducements which made many weak people, even about the court, embrace that religion from falſe hopes and worldly temptations.

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So candid and juſt a repreſentation had the more weight with the king at the moment, as he well knew the chancellor was no advocate for the old ſanguinary laws againſt the papiſts; and as the order to the judges for convicting them would be of no material prejudice to them, without a farther proceeding upon their conviction, which his majeſty could eaſily reſtrain. The chancellor alſo pointed out to him, that the unchecked reſort of the Romiſh prieſts and jeſuits was a very great grievance to the catholics themſelves; that by contracting their numbers, and by other regulations in the propoſed bill, his majeſty might himſelf know the names of all prieſts remaining in the kingdom, and the ſeveral ſtations where they reſided; which, he ſaid, muſt produce ſuch a ſecurity to thoſe who ſtayed, and to thoſe with whom they ſtayed, as would free them from any apprehenſion of any penalties impoſed by former laws.

It was in conſequence of theſe remarks, that the king, without imparting his deſigns to any of his private favourites, commanded the chancellor to give proper inſtructions to the judges on the ſubject; and reſolved to have two ſuch bills prepared as he had mentioned to the parliament. But all his purpoſes vaniſhed, as ſoon as they were diſcovered. His own diſcourſe about the bill againſt the Roman catholics excited an immediate alarm among them

them and their numerous friends at court. They complained that the king was deceived by the chancellor. They ſaid, "that the direction given to the judges was the neceſſary preamble to the higheſt perſecution the law had prepared againſt them: that, till their conviction, they were in the ſame predicament with the reſt of his majeſty's ſubjects; but as ſoon as they were convicted, they would be liable to all the other penalties, which his majeſty was inclined to protect them from." They alſo preſented to him a ſhort memorial of the diſadvantages which were conſequent to a conviction, in which they alledged many particulars, that were not clear in law, at leaſt, had never been practiſed in the ſevereſt times.

Though the king had well weighed all he had done, before he determined upon it with the chancellor; and though he well knew, after all their inſinuations and allegations, that none of thoſe inconveniencies could enſue to them, if he reſtrained any further proſecution, as he always had intended to do; yet they wrought ſo far upon him, that he was ſorry for the order given to the judges, and threw out hints that he cared not how little it was attended to. Then for the bill he meant to preſent in the next ſeſſion, the ſame perſons ſaid, "that all the ſecurity and quiet they had enjoyed ſince his majeſty's happy return, depended wholly upon

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the general opinion, that he had favour for them, and ſatisfaction in their duty and obedience as good ſubjects, and in their readineſs to do him any ſervice; (which they would all make good with their lives) but if he ſhould diſcover any jealouſies of their fidelity, and that there was need of a new law againſt them, which his purpoſe of providing a bill implied, what mitigations ſoever his majeſty intended in it, it would not be in his power to reſtrain the paſſion of other men: they were ſure, all thoſe animoſities, which had been hitherto covered and concealed through reſpect for his majeſty, would upon this occaſion break out to their deſtruction: they hoped therefore that, whatever bitterneſs the parliament might expreſs againſt them, at its next meeting, ſuch unjuſt prejudices would receive no invitation or encouragement from any jealouſy, or diſpleaſure manifeſted towards them by his majeſty." Theſe and the like arguments, or rather the influence and credit of thoſe who urged them, made ſuch impreſſion, that he declined any farther thought of the bill, nor was there ever after any mention of it. The Roman catholics grew bolder in all places, and converſant in thoſe rooms of the court, into which the king's chaplains never preſumed to enter; and, to crown all their hopes, lady Caſtlemaine now made public profeſſion of that faith, and inveighed ſharply againſt the church ſhe had been bred in.

During

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During the interval of the parliament there was not ſuch a vacation from trouble and anxiety as was expected. The domeſtic unquietneſs in the court made every day more noiſe abroad: infinite ſcandals and calumnies were ſcattered amongſt the people: the increaſe of taxes, the decay of trade, and the fall of rents throughout the kingdom were loudly complained of; and what, perhaps, provoked the public clamour ſtill more, the profuſion of the court, and of thoſe who depended upon it, was carried to the greateſt exceſſes; and the king himſelf, after all his admirable ſpeeches, grew leſs intent upon buſineſs, and fonder of his pleaſures, to which he preſcribed no limits, nor to the expences which could not but accompany them. The gloom of deſpondency hung over every thinking mind; and many ſenſible men really believed, that God was angry with the nation, and reſolved to exerciſe them under greater tribulation than they had ever before experienced.

Diſmal proſpect of public affairs.

In this ſtate of general diſcontent, while the court were upon a journey of pleaſure in the weſt, informations were received of a deſign formed by the republicans and fanatics to ſeize York and other towns in the north, and to excite a general inſurrection. The practice of contriving or inventing plots for the ſole purpoſe of committing obnoxious and ſuſpected perſons to priſon had be-

Information of a new conſpiracy.

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gun in the late troubles; and was too much continued after his majeſty's peaceful reſtoration. The

1663. accounts, however, which were laid before the council of this freſh conſpiracy were ſo plauſible, ſo circumſtantial, and at the ſame time ſo alarming, as they ſtated that all the diſbanded officers and ſoldiers were to join in it, that orders were immediately iſſued to increaſe the vigilance of the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of all the northern countries; and ſeveral troops of horſe were ſent to ſecure the city of York, and to attend ſome of the places, where it was ſaid the malecontents had propoſed to aſſemble. A great many people were taken up; and all the priſons in the north were ſoon ſo full, that the king thought it neceſſary to ſend down four or five of the judges to York, with a commiſſion of oyer and terminer to examine the whole matter there. Several of the priſoners were condemned, ſeventeen or eighteen executed, ſome reprieved, and a great number left to be tried at the next aſſizes.

1664. The judges were returned from York a little time before the meeting of parliament; and the king reſolved to avail himſelf of ſo good a pretence and of ſo ſeaſonable an opportunity for ſoliciting the repeal of the Triennial Act, to which his father had given an involuntary aſſent, and which was in truth a very great check on the royal power and

Uſe made of it at the re-meeting of parliament.

prerogative,

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prerogative *. He knew that the preſent parliament would not object to a requeſt which tended to remove all bounds to their own duration: he only wanted a popular pretext for that meaſure; and he could not wiſh for a better than the late alarm, ſo univerſally ſpread, of a republican inſurrection. When the two houſes therefore met, his majeſty, after enlarging on the danger and extent of thoſe rebellious combinations, ſaid, "he could not upon this occaſion omit to tell his parliament, that the deſperate conſpirators (as appeared by ſeveral examinations) had not been all of one mind in the ways of carrying on their wicked deſigns: ſome would ſtill inſiſt on the authority of the long parliament, of which they ſaid they had numbers enough willing to meet: others fancied to themſelves by ſome computation of their own, upon a clauſe in the Triennial Bill, that the preſent parliament was at an end ſome months ſince; and that for want of new writs, they might aſſemble themſelves to chuſe repreſentatives, which would be the beſt expedient to bring themſelves together for their other purpoſes. For the long parliament," his majeſty ſaid, "that he and they together could do no more than was already done to inform and compoſe the minds of men; let

* See the account of this act, with a detection of Mr. Hume's errors and inconſiſtencies in his remarks upon it, in the Sketches of Conſtitutional Hiſtory prefixed to the firſt volume of this work.

them

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them proceed upon that at their peril; but he thought there had been nothing done to diſabuſe men in reſpect of the Triennial Bill: he confeſſed that he had often himſelf read over that bill; and though there was no colour for the fancy of determination of this parliament, yet he would not deny, that he had always expected that they would, and even wondered that they had not conſidered the wonderful clauſes in that bill, which had paſſed in a time very uncareful of the dignity of the crown, or the ſecurity of the people *."

Having thus prepared the compliance of his hearers by the diſcovery of his own ſentiments, his majeſty deſired the ſpeaker and the gentlemen of the houſe of commons to give that Triennial Bill a reading, and then, in God's name, to do what they thought fit for him, themſelves, and the whole kingdom; adding, "that he needed not to tell them, how much he loved parliaments; never king was ſo much beholding to parliaments as he had been, nor did he think that the crown could ever be happy without frequent parliaments; but he wiſhed them to aſſure themſelves, that if he ſhould think otherwiſe, he would never ſuffer a

* It is very evident from the whole tenor of Charles's conduct, that he had as little idea of the real dignity of the crown, as he had regard for the ſecurity or rights of the people.

parliament

parliament to come together by the means prescribed by that bill *."

After the king had fully explained himself on this point, he renewed his thanks to the commons for the supply of the four subsidies granted him the last sessions; "yet," he said, "that supply was fallen much short of what he expected, and they intended: it would hardly be believed, yet they knew it to be true, that very many persons, who had estates of three or four thousand pounds by the year, did not pay for those four subsidies sixteen pounds; so that whereas the commons intended and declared, that they should be collected according to former precedents, they did not now arise to the same proportion as in the time of queen Elizabeth; and yet," he added, "the crown wanted more now than it did then, and the subject was at least as well able to give: the truth was, that, by the licence of the late time, and the ill humour of this, too many of the people, and even

* What a corrupt set of slaves Charles knew he was addressing, or he never would have dared to avow not only his contempt, but his determined violation of a law, which had been formally sanctioned by all the branches of the legislature! This was asserting his right to the dispensing power with a vengeance, and in a matter of the utmost constitutional importance. Yet the pension-parliament tamely acquiesced in this last subversion of the only barrier that was left them against the encroachments of arbitrary power.

of

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of thoſe who made fair profeſſions, believed it to be no ſin to defraud the crown of any thing that was due to it: tonnage and poundage had been no ſooner given him, than men were deviſing all the means they could to defraud the cuſtoms; nor could the farmers of the revenue be ſo vigilant for the collection, as others were to evade the duties: they gave him the exciſe, which all people abroad believed to be the moſt *inſenſible* impoſition that could be laid upon a people*: what conſpiracies and combinations were entered into by the brewers, who, he was ſure, did not bear the burthen themſelves, even to bring that revenue to nothing, they would hear in Weſtminſter-hall: they had given him the chimney-money, which they had reaſon to believe would be a growing revenue, for men built at leaſt faſt enough; and they would therefore wonder that it was already

* It was, probably, this artful inſinuation that ſuggeſted to Mr. Pitt, if not the hint for extending the exciſe, at leaſt his moſt ſpecious argument in ſupport of the meaſure. It would increaſe the revenue, he ſaid, without making the people *feel the weight* of any additional burthens. This, however, is mere ſophiſtry. It is not the enormity of the load, but its vexatious and galling preſſure that is complained of. In the laſt parliamentary debate on this ſubject, even the attorney-general was forced to acknowledge, "that the exciſe laws were anomalous to the Engliſh conſtitution." How then can the pretence of rendering any particular branch of the duties more productive be admitted as a good reaſon for an arbitrary and unconſtitutional method of collecting them?

declined,

declined, and that the laſt half year brought in leſs than the former did: he deſired therefore that they would review that bill, and ſince he was ſure they would have him receive whatſoever they gave, that he might have the collecting and huſbanding of it by his own officers; and then he doubted not but to improve that receipt, and he would be cozened as little as he could." CHAP. I. 1664.

His majeſty concluded his ſpeech with deſiring and conjuring both houſes, "to keep a very good correſpondence together, that it might not be in the power of any ſeditious or factious ſpirits to make them jealous of each other, or either of them jealous of him, till they ſhould ſee him *pretend one thing, and do another, which he was ſure they had never yet done:* he aſſured them, that it ſhould be in nobody's power to make him jealous of them; and ſo deſired them to diſpatch what they found neceſſary, that they might be ready for a ſeſſion within two months or thereabouts, becauſe the ſeaſon of the year would invite them all to take the country air."

The hint of diſpatch had a wonderful eff[illegible] of the upon both houſes; and they proceeded with gr[illegible]ial alacrity to the work which his majeſty had cut [illegible] for them. In little more than ten days they car[illegible] through, and got ready for the royal aſſent a[illegible] for the repeal of the Triennial law; which wa[illegible] gratefu[illegible]

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grateful to the king, that he went in perſon to the houſe to paſs it, and to thank them, adding, "that every good Engliſhman would alſo thank them for it, as the act they had repealed could only have ſerved to diſcredit parliaments; to make the crown jealous of parliaments, and parliaments of the crown; and to perſuade neighbour princes, that England was not governed under a MONARCH *."

Act to ſuppreſs conventicles.

As the parliament made this entrance, they went on with unabated zeal in compleating all other buſineſs within the two months, in which the king deſired they would be ready for a prorogation. They empowered his majeſty, according to his particular deſire to collect the tax of hearth-money by officers of his own; and they farther gratified him in making a very ſevere law to prevent and ſuppreſs conventicles, without taking any notice

* An act to prevent the inconveniences happening by the long intermiſſion of parliaments was inconſiſtent with Charles's idea of monarchy; but what is moſt remarkable in this tranſaction between the king and his hirelings, is the paltry artifice made uſe of by the latter to hide from their conſtituents ſo treacherous a ſurrender of their only remaining ſecurity. They entitled it "an act for the aſſembling and holding parliaments once in three years at the leaſt, &c." as if to amuſe the people with the ſpecious form of their ancient conſtitution, while they robbed them of their moſt ineſtimable privilege, the power of diſmiſſing after ſufficient trial ſuch repreſentatives as had betrayed their truſt.

of

of the growth of popery *. But this ſeſſion, though ſhort, was not entirely devoted to the king alone. The parliament prepared a very good bill, and very neceſſary for a time of ſuch corruption, that had contracted new ways of diſhoneſty and villainy, which former times had not thought of †.

* We cannot give a better account of this act for the total ſuppreſſion of all public worſhip according to the preſbyterian form, than in the words of the ſpeaker of the houſe of commons, upon preſenting it with the other bills to the king. "We have," ſaid he, "prepared a bill againſt the frequenting of conventicles, the ſeed-plots and nurſeries of ſeditious opinions, under pretence of religious worſhip. The firſt offence is made puniſhable with five pounds, or three months' impriſonment, and ten pounds for a peer: the ſecond offence ten pounds, or ſix months' impriſonment, and twenty pounds for a peer: but the third offence, after a trial by jury, and the trial of a peer by his peers, the party convicted ſhall be tranſported to ſome foreign plantation, unleſs he lays down an hundred pounds—

———Immedicabile vulnus
Enſe recidendum, ne pars ſincera trahatur."

Care alſo was taken to prevent this act from being evaded by holding religious meetings in private houſes; for the penalties were extended to every five perſons, over and above thoſe of the ſame houſehold, who aſſembled to worſhip God, after a different mode from that of the eſtabliſhed church.

† The writer has pointed out very clearly, in a former part of this chapter, the true cauſe of ſuch general, and before unheard of corruption. It flowed from the polluted fountain of the great, and ſpread its infection through all the lower claſſes of ſociety. Was it likely that common ſailors would heſitate to take a bribe, or to ſacrifice honour and honeſty to preſent gain, when the lords and commons were not aſhamed to ſet the example?

Its

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Its object was to prevent a ſpecies of treachery practiſed by many unworthy and cowardly maſters of ſhips and their crews, who were often contented to be robbed at ſea, and to have all their owners' goods taken, upon an allowance made to them by the pirate. This was a breach of truſt for which no law had before ſufficiently provided. A bill was therefore drawn up, and readily agreed to by both houſes, for the diſcovery and puniſhment of all ſuch treacherous and infamous actions, and for the reward of ſuch honeſt and ſtout ſeamen, as ſhould manfully and courageouſly defend their owners' goods, and therein maintain the honour of the nation. Theſe bills, and a few others * for the remedy of particular grievances, were preſented to the king, and confirmed by his aſſent, on the ſeventeenth of May, when his majeſty, after thanking the parliament in the uſual manner for their public ſervices, told them, "he did not intend to bring them together again till the month of November, that they might enjoy the ſummer in the tranſaction of their private affairs: yet becauſe there

* One was for preventing abatement of writs of error on judgment in the Exchequer; another for ſuppreſſing the diſturbances of ſeamen, and preſerving the ſtores belonging to the navy; a third againſt deceitful, diſorderly, and exceſſive gaming; and a fourth for the continuance of a former act to *regulate* the preſs; that is to ſay, to prohibit and to puniſh by fines, by impriſonment, by the ſeizure of property, and by corporal puniſhments, the publication of any truth, that might be diſagreeable to thoſe in power.

might

might ſome emergent occaſion fall out, that might make it neceſſary to bring them together ſooner, he would prorogue them only to Auguſt; and befor then they ſhould have ſeaſonable notice by proclamation not to give their attendance, except ſuch occaſions ſhould fall out."

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Inveſtigation of the remote cauſes of a rupture with the Dutch.

The poſſible emergency, which the king ſaid might oblige him to convene the parliament before November, was the great likelihood of a rupture with the Dutch, againſt whom both houſes had preſented in the courſe of this ſeſſion a very menacing addreſs. But in my remarks on their proceedings I deferred taking any notice of their hoſtile reſolutions, that I might bring into one point of view the different cauſes of this impolitic war, ſome of which I muſt trace a little farther back.

Eſtabliſhment of the royal African company.

Upon the king's firſt arrival in England, he manifeſted a great deſire to improve the general traffic of the kingdom, and often conferred with the moſt active merchants on the ſubject. He alſo eſtabliſhed a council of trade; but its only effect was to give birth to a variety of ſchemes and adventures, the projectors of which had commonly much more regard to their own intereſt than to the public good. Some merchants and ſeamen made a propoſal by Mr. William Coventry and a few others to the duke of York, for the erection of a company, in which they deſired his royal

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highneſs to preſide, and to which his majeſty ſhould grant the ſole trade of Guinea. This, they aſſerted, would in a ſhort time bring great advantage to the nation, and much profit to the adventurers, who were to begin upon a joint ſtock, to be managed by a committee choſen from among themſelves.

Before the troubles, a ſimilar privilege had been granted by the late king to ſir Nicholas Criſpe and others named by him, who at their own charge ſent ſhips to the African coaſt. In order to carry on the trade with greater convenience, ſir Nicholas purchaſed from the natives a nook of land, that jutted out into the ſea, and built thereon warehouſes and a fort, under which the ſhips lay in great ſafety. After the breaking out of the civil war, ſir Nicholas betook himſelf to ſerve the king; but the trade was continued by others, either with ſir Nicholas's conſent, or through Cromwell's power, and the fort he had built, called Fort Cormantine, was ſtill in the poſſeſſion of the Engliſh, when his preſent majeſty returned. The trade thither from England was, indeed, ſmall, in reſpect the Dutch had fixed a ſtronger quarter at no great diſtance from it, and ſent much more ſhips and commodities there, and returned once every year to their own country with much wealth. But it was ſaid, that it might now be eaſily extended in ſpite of thoſe rivals; that it would open a wider market

market for putting off great quantities of our own manufactures; and afford valuable returns in gold, which that coaſt produced in good quantity, and in negro ſlaves, who were readily ſold to any plantation at great prices.

The duke was much pleaſed with the details both of the plan, and the proſpect of advantage, which was likely to reſult from it. He quickly procured a charter, with ample privileges to be granted by the king to the company; and even perſuaded his majeſty to become himſelf an adventurer, and what was more, to aſſiſt them, for the firſt eſtabliſhment of their trade, with the uſe of ſome of his own ſhips. The duke was the governor of the company, thence called the royal company. He had alſo the power of appointing a deputy; but all the other officers and the committee were choſen by the entire body of adventurers, who were all perſons of quality. Every one of them brought in five hundred pounds for the joint ſtock, with which they ſet out the firſt ſhips; upon the returns whereof they received ſo much encouragement, that they compounded with ſir Nicholas Criſpe for his property in the fort and caſtle, and poſſeſſed themſelves of another place upon the coaſt, for the greater convenience and enlargement of their traffic. They increaſed the number of their ſhipping, all which made profitable returns, by putting off their blacks at Barbadoes and the

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other plantations, at their own prices, and brought home ſuch ſtore of gold, as adminiſtered the firſt occaſion for the coinage of thoſe pieces, which from thence had the denomination of guineas.

Other branches of commerce neglected.

But though the people were at firſt dazzled with the vaſt profits which reſulted from the eſtabliſhment of this new company, the general intereſt of the ſtate, ſo far from being promoted, was very much injured by it. Other branches of commerce, that might have afforded more laſting and ſecure advantages, were ſuffered to languiſh. Even the trade to the Eaſt-Indies, which had of late been ſo badly conducted as to call loudly for the immediate care and interference of government, was diſregarded, and the royal patronage and aſſiſtance were wholly confined to the favourite company. Nor was this the only evil attending it. The nation was thereby plunged into a war, which was chiefly, if not ſolely owing to the avarice, the rapacity, and intrigues of the African adventurers.

Suggeſtions of mercantile jealouſy and avarice.

From the firſt entrance into this trade, it was eaſily diſcovered that the Dutch had a better footing in Guinea than the Engliſh, which the latter were willing to believe the former had no right to; for that they themſelves had firſt ſettled there, and were therefore entitled to exclude all others, at leaſt by the ſame law that the Spaniards claimed the ſole property of the Weſt Indies, and the Dutch

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Dutch what they, or the Portugueſe enjoyed in the Eaſt. But this pretence they quickly found would not eſtabliſh ſuch a title as would bear a diſpute: the having ſent a ſhip or two thither and built a little fort could not be allowed ſuch a poſſeſſion as would ſhut out other nations; and the truth was, the Dutch were there ſome time before us, and the Danes before either; and the Dutch (which was the real grievance) had planted themſelves more advantageouſly, upon the bank of a river, than we had done, and by the erection of more forts were more ſtrongly ſeated, and drove a much greater trade, which it was not likely they could be perſuaded to quit. This drew the diſcourſe from the point of right to the eaſineſs, by the aſſiſtance of two or three of the king's ſhips, to take away all that the Dutch poſſeſſed in and about Guinea, there having never been a ſhip of war ſeen in thoſe parts, ſo that the work might be preſently done, and ſuch an alliance made with the natives, who did not love the Dutch, as that the Engliſh may be unqueſtionably poſſeſſed of the whole trade of that country, which would be of ineſtimable profit to the kingdom.

Such were the arguments which the members of the committee took much delight to enlarge upon at their meetings, that were held once a week at the duke of York's lodgings at Whitehall. They went farther, and endeavoured to ſhew what im-

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menſe benefit would accrue from a barefaced war againſt the Dutch, and how eaſily they might be conquered, and the trade carried on by the Engliſh. They ſaid, "that Cromwell had always beaten them, and brought them upon their knees, and could have totally ſubdued them, if he had not thought it more for his intereſt to have ſuch a ſecond, whereby he might the better ſupport his uſurpation: that it was from this motive alone he made peace with them, after they had conſented to all the infamous conditions of totally abandoning the royal cauſe, and, as far as in them lay, to the extirpation of all the royal family, and to a perpetual excluſion of the prince of Orange: that the only popular and glorious thing the uſurper had ever done was his having compelled them to pay a great ſum of money for the damages which the Engliſh had ſuſtained at Amboyna, when all the demands and threats from king James could never procure any ſatisfaction for that foul action *."

Theſe

* The war with the Dutch was certainly the moſt glorious part of Cromwell's adminiſtration. Enraged at the favours that people had ſhewn to the family of the Stewarts, and at their affording an aſylum to Engliſh outlaws; piqued alſo that the republic of the United Provinces ſhould pretend to the dominion of the ſea, he reſolved at once to inſpire reſpect for his country, and to avenge himſelf. Of all the maritime wars recorded in hiſtory none were more famous for the ſkill of the commanders, for the bravery of the ſailors, and for the number of obſtinate and bloody engagements, in which the Engliſh at length

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The duke of York's eagerneſs for a war.

Theſe diſcourſes, with ſome remarks on the tardineſs of the Dutch to reſtore, according to treaty, the iſland of Poleron, which they had ſo long ſince barbarouſly taken from the Engliſh, being often reiterated in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, made a very deep impreſſion on the duke, who, beſides his hava particular averſion to the Dutch, longed impatiently for any war, in which he knew he could not but have the chief command. This diſpoſition of his was alſo aſſiduouſly cultivated by many perſons about the court, who hoped thereby to advance their own intereſt, and to get more power into their own hands.

length gained a deciſive ſuperiority. But Cromwell, having fully gratified his own reſentment, checked his country in the career of conqueſt and of glory. He made peace with the Dutch; and though the terms were very humiliating to them, and very honourable to England, yet they were far from being ſo advantageous to the latter as might have been expected from ſuch brilliant ſucceſſes. He did not exert himſelf as far as he might in favour of India. He was ſatisfied with providing for the ſecurity of the Engliſh trade, procuring a diſavowal of the maſſacre at Amboyna, and inſiſting upon an indemnification for the deſcendants of the unhappy victims who periſhed in that dreadful tranſaction. He alſo took care, as is above obſerved, to ſtipulate for having the iſland of Poleron reſtored: but no mention was made in the treaty of the forts taken from the nation by the Dutch in the iſland of Java, and in ſeveral of the Moluccas, by which that monopolizing people had aimed at getting all the ſpices into their own hands.

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But there was lately a peace fully concluded with the States-General upon the ſame terms, articles, and conditions, which they had formerly yielded to Cromwell, and upon the ratification of which they iſſued orders for the delivery of the iſland of Poleron to the Engliſh Eaſt-India company *. They alſo gave at the ſame time another proof of their readineſs to comply with any reaſonable or juſt requiſition on the part of his majeſty. As during the interval between the two treaties, a miſunderſtanding had taken place between both nations on account of two Engliſh ſhips, which our merchants ſaid had been unjuſtly attacked and captured by the Dutch in the Eaſt-Indies, the States, in order to prevent the treaty from being delayed by the inveſtigation of this claim, agreed to depoſit fourſcore thouſand florins for the full indemnification of the ſufferers, in caſe the proceſs already commenced on account of their ſhips ſhould be decided in their favour. After doing all this, there could be no colour of juſtice to make war upon them. Beſides there were then great jealouſies from Spain, on account of the marriage with Portugal; nor had France, notwithſtanding all her

* Before the Dutch reſtored this iſland, they rooted up all the trees that furniſh the ſpices; but as the ſoil ſtill remained, and might, with proper culture, prove an obſtacle to the monopoly which they meant to eſtabliſh, they retook it in 1666, and could never after be prevailed upon to give it up.

profeſſions,

professions, made any haste to renew the treaty with England. She had even, contrary to the positive assurance given by Monsieur Bastide in the French king's name, concluded a treaty with the States, without any previous notification of the terms to his Britannic majesty. It therefore could not but seem strange, that we should desire to make war upon Holland, the only state, except Portugal, with which we had as yet renewed former treaties of peace, and that so lately, and after such long deliberation.

However, the duke's heart was set upon it, and he loved to speak of it, and the benefits which would attend it. He had not yet thought proper to propose it in council; but he mentioned it privately to many of the members, and found most of them to concur with him in the opinion of the advantages which might arise from thence. He also pressed it very earnestly upon the king, who, he well knew, had no kindness for the Dutch; and he often left his majesty strongly disposed towards it by an argument, which he found prevailed with many, and which he never failed to enforce in any conversation upon the subject. He said, "that the differences and jealousies in point of trade, which did every day fall out, and would every day increase between the English and the Dutch, who had in the late distractions gained great advantages, would unavoidably produce a war

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war between them: then the queſtion only was, whether it were not better for us to begin it now, when they did not expect it, and we were better prepared for it than probably we ſhould be then; or to ſtay two or three years, in which the ſame jealouſy would provoke them to be well provided, when probably we might not be ready:" he added, "that we had the beſt ſea-officers in the world, many of whom had often beaten the Dutch, and knew how to do it again; a multitude of excellent mariners and common ſeamen, all of whom, if they found that nothing was to be done at home, would diſperſe themſelves in merchant voyages to the Indies and the Streights, and probably ſo many good men would never be found together again."

Its impolicy and injuſtice demonſtrated by the chancellor.

When by theſe and the like arguments he thought he had ſufficiently ſecured the king's concurrence, he propoſed the matter to the chancellor, whom he found to be paſſionately and obſtinately againſt it, and who thought it his duty to point out to his highneſs, and afterwards to the king, the probable conſequences of ſo unjuſt, ſo unſeaſonable, and ſo ill-adviſed a war. The chancellor repreſented to his majeſty "the ſtate of his own affairs, the great debt, that yet lay upon him, which with peace and good huſbandry might be in ſome time paid; but that a war would involve him in ſo much greater, that no man could ſee the end of it:

it: that his majeſty would be able to preſerve himſelf againſt the factions and diſtempers in his own kingdom, and probably ſuppreſs them, if he were without a foreign enemy; but if he ſhould be engaged in a war abroad, his domeſtic diviſions, eſpecially thoſe in religion, would give him more trouble than he could well ſtruggle withal: that it was an erroneous aſſumption, that the Dutch would be better provided for a war two or three years hence, and his majeſty worſe; for that it would be his own fault, if, within that time, the diſtempers in his three kingdoms were not compoſed, which would make him much fitter for a war, whereas now neither of them could be ſaid to be in peace, Ireland being wholly unſettled, Scotland not yet well pleaſed, and England far from it: that in that time it was very probable the two crowns of France and Spain would be engaged in a war, ſince it was generally believed, and with great reaſon, that France only waited for the death of the king of Spain, who was very infirm, and then meant to fall into Flanders, having already provided great magazines of corn and hay upon the borders, which could be for no other end: that whilſt his majeſty continued in peace, his friendſhip would be valuable to all the princes of Europe, and the two crowns would ſtrive who ſhould gain him; but if he engaged in a war, particularly with Holland, which would interrupt and diſturb all the trade of the kingdom whence the greateſt

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greateſt part of his revenue aroſe, all other princes would look on, and not much eſteem any offices he could perform for them."

To theſe very forcible remarks on the impolicy of the war the chancellor added the flagrancy of its injuſtice. He ſaid "that a general outcry would be raiſed againſt ſo precipitate and unprovoked a rupture, after the late ratification of a treaty of peace." But perceiving, that this part of his diſcourſe was not ſo well reliſhed as the former, he did not enlarge upon it; and contented himſelf with obſerving, "that a little time might poſſibly adminiſter a juſt occaſion of a war, which at preſent there was not."

The king yielded to the full evidence of theſe truths; but the duke was very much diſpleaſed, that the chancellor ſhould poſitively endeavour to croſs him in an affair, upon which his heart was ſo much ſet. The ſubject, however, was ſeemingly dropt, and for ſome months, there was no more mention of it in the court, though the perſons, who firſt laid the deſign, ſtill cultivated it ſecretly, and made little of bringing it at laſt to paſs.

Both houſes ſeduced into a menacing addreſs againſt the Dutch.

During the laſt ſhort ſeſſion of parliament, thoſe private adviſers of a war with Holland did not forget what they had to do. They knew, indeed, that it was not a good ſeaſon to ſpeak of raiſing freſh

freſh ſupplies of money, which the king himſelf had forborne to mention, that the people might ſee one ſeſſion at leaſt paſs without new impoſitions; and therefore, that it would be improper to propoſe a war in direct terms. However, they made ſuch an approach towards it, as might render a farther advance much more eaſy. The merchants in the committee of trade, who had all private views of intereſt in this buſineſs, and who were alſo entirely governed by the dictates of the duke of York, lamented much the obſtructions and diſcouragements, which, they ſaid, they had long found in their commerce by ſea, and with other nations, and which were not removed by the bleſſed return of the king, all which they imputed to the pride and avarice of the Hollanders. They aſſerted, "that thoſe inſolent republicans obſerved no laws of commerce, nor any conditions, which even they themſelves conſented to: that by their fraud and practice the Engliſh were almoſt driven out of the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies, and had their trade in Turkey and Africa much diminiſhed: that, beſides many other unſufferable indignities offered by them to his majeſty and to the crown of England, his ſubjects had in few years ſuſtained the damage of ſeven or eight hundred thouſand pounds ſterling;" and here they added a particular inſtance in the loſs of the two ſhips before-mentioned.

A report

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A report of all thoſe pretended grievances was made to parliament from the committee of trade; and after a very ſhort inquiry into the grounds of ſuch complaints, the commons reſolved, and eaſily obtained the concurrence of the lords in the ſame reſolution, "That the wrongs, diſhonours, and indignities done to his majeſty by the ſubjects of the United Provinces in India, Africa, and elſewhere, and the damages done by them to the Engliſh merchants, are the greateſt obſtructions of the trade of England: that the ſame be ſpeedily preſented to his majeſty, and he be moved to take ſome effectual courſe for redreſs of theſe injuries, and all others of the like nature, and for prevention of the like for the future: and that, in proſecution thereof, they would with their lives and fortunes aſſiſt his majeſty againſt all oppoſitions whatſoever." An addreſs, drawn up according to theſe reſolutions, was immediately preſented by both houſes to the king, who next day ſent them a written anſwer, "That he was pleaſed with their zeal for the advancement of trade, and the removal of all obſtructions which might hinder the ſame; being convinced that nothing would more contribute to the honour of the nation, and the proſperity of his people: that he would examine the complaints which had been repreſented by his parliament, and order his miniſter in Holland to demand ſpeedy reparation; and, in caſe of a denial,

the

he relied on their promiſe and declaration to ſtand by him."

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The whole of this ſcheme for obtaining the addreſs from parliament was contrived and managed by ſir William Bennet, ſir Charles Berkeley, and lord Aſhley, a man of much greater abilities than either, and of whoſe recompence for this firſt exertion of his ingenuity to pleaſe the duke of York I ſhall preſently have occaſion to take notice. As the chancellor, beſides his other arguments to diſſuade the king and duke from any rupture with the Dutch, had ſaid, "That he did not think the parliament would be forward to encourage the war; and ſince it was a ſubject entirely in the king's determination, all the odium of it would inevitably fall upon his majeſty and his miniſters;" it was neceſſary, in order to refute theſe aſſertions, to induce both houſes to manifeſt ſuch warm reſentment of the ſuppoſed wrongs and indignities ſuffered from the Dutch, as might ſeem to force the king to a peremptory demand of reparation. By the temporary ſucceſs of this artifice, the point was gained, and the chancellor forced to withdraw his offenſive and unavailing oppoſition.

It was eaſy to foreſee that this firſt ſtep would ſoon lead to actual hoſtilities; and the proſecution of the buſineſs to that end could not be put into better hands, than thoſe of the perſon mentioned by

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by the king in his anſwer, who was his majeſty's reſident at the Hague, and who being alſo a member of the houſe of commons, had inflamed them more than the merchants themſelves againſt the Dutch. This was ſir George Downing, a man of obſcure birth, and more obſcure education, which he had received in part in New England. He had paſſed through many offices in Cromwell's army, of chaplain, ſcout-maſter, and other employments; and at laſt obtained great credit with the uſurper, and under that countenance married a beautiful lady of very noble extraction.

When Cromwell had ſubdued the Dutch to the temper he wiſhed, and thereupon made a peace with them, he choſe Downing to reſide as his agent in Holland, knowing him to be a man of great pride and inſolence, and who would add to any imperious command of his ſomewhat of the bitterneſs of his own ſpirit. It ſoon appeared how well ſuited he was to the uſurper's purpoſes in this new employment; for he did ſo fully execute his charge in all things, eſpecially when he might manifeſt his animoſity againſt the royal party, that having notice of the king's being upon a tour of pleaſure incognito to Amſterdam and other towns in the ſame province, he delivered a memorial to the States of Holland, wherein he incloſed the third article of their treaty, by which they were obliged not to ſuffer any traitor, rebel, or any other perſon, who

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who was declared an enemy to the commonwealth of England, to reſide or ſtay in their dominions; and told them, that Charles Stewart, and the marquis of Ormond had been lately in Amſterdam, and were ſtill in ſome places adjacent; and required that they might not be permitted to remain in any part of the dominions of the States. Upon this the States ſent immediately to the princeſs of Orange, who was then at her country houſe of Hounſlerdyke, that if her brother were then with her, or ſhould come to her, he ſhould forthwith depart out of their province. An order to the ſame purport was alſo publiſhed at the Hague, and ſent to Amſterdam and other towns, according to their cuſtom.

With this rude punctuality Downing behaved himſelf during the life of Cromwell, and while his ſon retained the uſurpation; but when he ſaw Richard thrown out, and that the ſtruggles and intrigues, which followed, might lead to the king's reſtoration, he bethought himſelf how he might have a reſerve of his majeſty's favour. The marquis of Ormond making a journey about that time incognito to the Hague, upon a marriage of his eldeſt ſon with a noble lady whoſe friends lived there, Downing found an opportunity to have a private conference with him; and made an offer of his ſervices to the king, if his devotion might be concealed, without which, he ſaid, it would be

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uſeleſs to his majeſty. For an earneſt of his fidelity, he informed the marquis of ſome particulars, which were of moment for the king to know; and engaged in future to give his majeſty notice of any thing that it would be neceſſary or uſeful to be informed of with reference to England, or Holland. The marquis thought it very fit to accept of ſuch an inſtrument, and promiſed him to acquaint his majeſty with his good affection, who, he preſumed, would receive it graciouſly, and give him as much encouragement to continue it, as his majeſty's preſent condition would permit. To this the other replied, that he knew the king's preſent circumſtances too well, to expect any reward from him; but if his majeſty would vouchſafe, when he ſhould be reſtored, to confirm to him the office he then held of a teller in the exchequer, and continue him in his employment in Holland, where he preſumed he ſhould be able to do his majeſty more ſervice than a ſtranger could do, he would think himſelf abundantly rewarded. Upon the marquis's return to the king at Bruſſels, he was authorized to aſſure Downing of his majeſty's acceptation, and that all that he expected ſhould be made good.

This was the ground and reaſon that, when the king came to the Hague the year following to embark for England, he received Downing very graciouſly, and knighted him, and left him there as his reſident; which many, who were near the king,

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king, but knew nothing of what had paſſed ſecretly, wondered at as much as ſtrangers, who had obſerved Downing's former behaviour. The States themſelves, who would not, at ſuch a time, do any thing that might offend his majeſty, could not forbear lamenting in private, that his majeſty would depute a perſon to have his authority, who had never uſed any other dialect but threats to perſuade them to whatever he propoſed; and who at ſeveral times had diſobliged moſt of their perſons by his inſolence. They ſoon had ſtill more reaſon to be diſſatisfied; for Downing having found out that the king and duke were in their hearts no friends to the States, he aſſumed a ſtill bolder tone, and made them feel the full weight of his increaſed conſequence. He never made ſuch repreſentations as men in the like miniſtries uſed to do, but put the worſt comments upon all their actions; and when he afterwards ſat as a member in the Engliſh houſe of commons, returning ſtill in the interval of parliament to his employment at the Hague, he took all opportunities to inveigh againſt their uſurpations in trade; and pretending to know many of their myſteries of iniquity, he rendered himſelf very acceptable to the houſe by laying them open.

When the province of expoſtulation for the injuries ſaid to be ſuſtained from the Dutch was committed to this their mortal enemy, he had his wiſh,

Reply of the States to Downing's memorial.

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and uſed little modeſty in urging it. The States anſwered, "that moſt of the particulars of which he complained, were put under oblivion by the late treaty; and that in conſideration thereof they had yielded to many points for the benefit of the Engliſh *: that for the other claim, in reſpect to the loſs of the two ſhips in the Eaſt-Indies, that likewiſe, by the ſame treaty, was referred to a proceſs in juſtice, againſt which no exception could yet be taken †: and laſtly, that ſince the concluſion of the treaty, which was not many months before, nothing could even be pretended to have been done on their part, which could give occaſion to the ſmalleſt miſunderſtanding." All this was ſtrictly true; but Downing, according to his uſual me-

* They had, in conſequence of that treaty, yielded to one point, highly diſhonourable to themſelves, and contrary to the laws of all generous nations: that was the treacherouſly giving up Corbet, Okey, and Berkſtead to the vengeance of the Engliſh court. See page 116 of the firſt volume.

† Downing, however, ſoon found an exception, by ſaying that the States made themſelves judges of the proceſs; to which they replied, "that it belonged to the cognizance of the admiralty of Amſterdam, who only had a right to decide it." He even took another ſtep to prevent any compromiſe on account of thoſe ſhips with the ſufferers; for when Cary, a man intruſted by the claimants with the management of the law-ſuit for one of the ſhips in diſpute, would have accepted of the offer of thirty thouſand pounds, he was hindered by Downing, who told him, that the claim was a matter of ſtate, and not a concern between private perſons.

thod,

thod, insisted upon his own demand *; and frequently reproached them with their former submissions to Cromwell, and their present presumptions upon the goodness and generosity of the king.

Advantage taken of their unsuspecting security.

It is without question, that the States General, guided by the standard of their own wariness and circumspection, did not suspect that the king intended to make war on them. They well knew the straights and necessities in which his affairs stood, both with reference to money, and to the several distempers of the nation in matters of religion, which might probably grow more dangerous, if there were a foreign war: they concluded, therefore, that Downing's importunities and menaces were but the results of his own impetuosity; and that the king would not be so forward to interrupt

* In one of count D'Estrade's letters, dated June 5, 1664, he says he had been told by De Wit, "that the difference between England and Holland arose on account of Downing's interests only, who had bought the pretended rights of the merchants concerned in those two ships, for a trifle: that to this end he inflamed the king of England's council, raising imaginary grievances and injuries received at sea by the English, which they never suffered." This was true in part; but the Dutch statesman was not in the secret of the resident's private instructions: he could not at that time know, that Holland had much more dangerous enemies in the English council than Downing, notwithstanding all his selfishness, falsehood, impetuosity, and insolence.

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and part with his own peace. According to this perſuaſion they ſent out their trading ſhips as uſual, without any of thoſe precautions, which commonly indicate the dread of hoſtilities. But the royal African company here acted in a very different manner. They ſent out a ſtronger fleet of merchant ſhips than they had ever before done; and for their better encouragement, the king lent them ſome of his own ſhips for a convoy *. The reaſon aſſigned for this was, that the Dutch had made it a common practice, not only in the Eaſt-Indies, but lately alſo upon the African coaſt, when they found that an advantageous trade was carried on in any port by ſome other nation, preſently to ſend their ſhips to lie before that port, and to declare war againſt the prince to whom the port belonged; which being done, they publiſhed a declaration, that it ſhould not be lawful for any nation whatſoever to trade to the territories of that prince, with whom they were then at war. The royal company therefore pretended it was neceſſary to put their fleets in a ſtate to reſiſt ſuch inſolence and uſurpation.

* Hiſtorians differ in their account of the number of ſhips, of which this ſquadron, ſent out under the command of ſir Robert Holmes, conſiſted; but whether it was twenty-two, or only fourteen men of war, it certainly far exceeded the ordinary means of peaceful ſecurity, and manifeſted a hoſtile deſign. Holmes's conduct ſoon put the matter beyond a doubt.

Not

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Not long after the departure of this fleet, in order to ſhew that ſuch ſteps had been taken only for the ſake of ſelf-defence, and to aſſert the rights and freedom of our trade, the king ordered a complaint of the above-mentioned practice of the Dutch to be added to the liſt of other grievances; and required Downing to demand a poſitive renunciation of all pretence on the part of the Dutch to ſuch an odious uſurpation. To this complaint and demand they deferred making an anſwer, till their embaſſador had preſented a memorial to the king on a recent injury, which they complained of in their turn. Captain Holmes, who commanded the ſhips of war, which the king had lent to the the royal company for the convoy of their fleet to Guinea, had, in the voyage thither, aſſaulted and taken the Dutch forts and ſettlements in the neighbourhood of Cape Verde*. Of this invaſion their embaſſador made a loud complaint; and demanded that the captain might be puniſhed ſeverely, and that the king might, in the mean time, give a preſent order to him, the embaſſador, for the re-delivery of thoſe places, which he would tranſmit to

* He not only expelled the Dutch from Cape Corſe, to which the Engliſh court pretended they had a title; but ſeized on all their ſettlements at Cape Verde, and in the iſland of Goree. Then, after erecting a fort in the mouth of the river Gambia, he proceeded all along the coaſt of Guinea, leaving the Dutch no other poſſeſſions there than two forts, Achin and St. George de Mina, which he did not attack.

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his maſters. The king told the embaſſador that the captain, if he had done any ſuch thing, had not the leaſt commiſſion or authority for ſo doing; that he was now on his way homeward, ſo that he might be expected ſpeedily, and then he ſhould be ſure to undergo ſuch puniſhment as the nature of his offence required, when the matter ſhould be examined; and they ſhould then receive full reparation *.

The treachery retaliated.

The States began now to think ſeriouſly of hoſtile preparation; but as they found they had been uſed treacherouſly, they reſolved to retaliate by means of ſome ſimilar artifice. Large fleets were at this time equipping both in Holland and England for the avowed purpoſe of contending for ſuperiority on the African coaſt; but when the Engliſh fleet under the command of prince Rupert was almoſt ready to ſail, the Dutch embaſſador preſented to the king an humble deſire from the States, that Prince Rupert's fleet might ſtay in harbour, as their's likewiſe, that was prepared for Guinea, ſhould, till ſome means might be found for the accommodation of all differences. They

* In order to keep up the deception a little longer, Holmes, upon his return, was confined to the Tower; but being ſoon after ſet at liberty, and no ſteps having been taken to redreſs the injury he had done the States, it was very evident that he had not acted from the impulſe of wanton inſolence, but by the expreſs orders of the duke of York.

had

had two objects in view, first to amuse the English, while they sent secret orders to De Ruyter, then cruizing in the Mediterranean, to make all possible haste with his fleet to Guinea, to recover their late losses; and next to gain time, in hopes that their homeward-bound fleets of merchantmen might return before the commencement of hostilities. They accomplished one of these objects, but in the other they were miserably disappointed.

At the time of De Ruyter's being first sent into the Mediterranean, the purport of his commission was to cruize against the pirates of Algiers and Tunis, who had, in truth, preyed very much upon the Dutch, taken many of their ships, and had abundance of their subjects in chains. When that fleet was ordered out by the Dutch, their embassador had requested of the king, that his majesty's fleet under the command of Lawson, which was then in those parts, and for the same purpose, might upon all occasions join with De Ruyter, when opportunities should be offered thereby to infest the Turks; to which his majesty consented. But the two naval commanders, instead of such an amicable union, sent home different complaints of each other. De Ruyter said, that upon meeting Lawson in the Mediterranean, he saluted the English admiral, who did not return the compliment, as he ought to have done according to an express stipulation in the treaty of 1662. Lawson,

on

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on his part, complained, that the ſole buſineſs of the Dutch admiral appeared to be to ranſom the captives with money, not to exact the delivery of them by force, and to make an accommodation for the time to come as well as he could; and that when the Engliſh fleet was at any time in purſuit of the Algerines, and expected that the Dutch, by whom they muſt paſs, would have given a little ſtop to their flight, which they might eaſily have done, they rather aſſiſted than obſtructed their eſcape. There was certainly a great deal of truth in thoſe mutual reproaches.

Progreſs of reciprocal provocations and injuries.

Intelligence was ſoon brought that De Ruyter, having concluded a haſty and diſhonourable peace with the pirates, had repaſſed the Streights, with an intent, as was naturally conjectured, to ſail to Guinea. As it was now too late to oppoſe him in that quarter, the king thought he might juſtly ſeize upon any ſhips belonging to the Dutch, to ſatisfy the damage that he could not but ſuſtain from De Ruyter's unreſiſted operations on the coaſt of Africa. It being now therefore the ſeaſon when the Dutch fleets returned with their wines from Bourdeaux, Rochelle, and other parts of France, ſuch of them, as were forced by the weather to put into the Engliſh harbours, were ſeized upon; and the duke of York having put himſelf on board, with a fleet of about fifty ſail, upon the report of the Dutch being come out to defend theirs,

theirs, took a great many more of their merchantmen, even upon their own coasts, which they chose rather to suffer, than to venture out of their ports to relieve them. That this proceeding might not appear an open breach of the late treaty, or a violation of the law of nations, the captured ships were not immediately condemned, but were ordered to be kept unladen and unhurt, till advice should be received from Guinea of what De Ruyter had done there. This, indeed, was merely to keep up appearances, as it was justly presumed that he would retaliate the violence committed by Holmes. He did not disappoint such expectations; for not content with retaking the places seized upon by Holmes, he dispossessed the English of many other forts and settlements of their own, took several of their ships in those parts, and then sailing to America, he exercised all the acts of hostility there which his commission authorized him to do, and made an attempt upon Barbadoes, but without success.

Some time before any intelligence was received of De Ruyter's proceedings, the East-India company complained and informed the king, that, when their officer had demanded the re-delivery of the island of Poleron, according to one of the articles of the late treaty, and had presented to the Dutch governor of that island the orders from the States, given by their embassador at London, the governor,

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governor, after making the Engliſh officer with his ſhip and men wait for two or three days, then told him, that upon a better peruſal of thoſe orders, he found they were not ſufficient, and therefore he could not give up the place, till he ſhould receive fuller inſtructions. In conſequence of this fraudulent evaſion, they ſaid, their officer and ſhip, which had been ſent at a great charge, was neceſſitated to return, without any effect than the affront and indignity to his majeſty.

Such was the ſtate and progreſs of reciprocal provocations and injuries, before either country publicly avowed and proclaimed its hoſtile deſigns, according to the forms very properly ſanctioned by the law of nations, but too often diſregarded even by thoſe that call themſelves moſt civilized.

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New ſeſſions of parliament—Vote of thanks to the city of London—Contrivance to obtain an unprecedented ſupply—Various embaſſies to foreign courts—Treaty entered into with the biſhop of Munſter—Miſmanagement of the navy ſince the king's return—All offices and commiſſions ſold to the higheſt bidder—Stores embezzled with impunity—New modelling of the navy-board—Silly bluſtering of the court—Unjuſt rules for the adjudication of prizes—Bad effects of encouraging privateers—Commiſſion to prevent the prize-money from being carried to the public account—Nightly meetings at lady Caſtlemaine's—Extraordinary ſcheme of toleration defeated—Religion turned into ridicule—Firſt appearance of the plague—War declared againſt the Dutch—New creations—Duplicity of the French court—Victory at ſea—Cauſe of not purſuing the ſucceſs—Command of the fleet given to the earl of Sandwich—The court removed to Saliſbury—Faint avowal of the French king's treaty with Holland—De Witt's indefatigable exertions—Reception of Mr. Coventry in Sweden—Diſreputable agreement with Denmark—The Daniſh king's ſhameleſs perfidy—The parliament convened at Oxford—Vote of freſh ſupplies—Five mile Act—Innovations

novations in the exchequer—Diſgrace incurred by the earl of Sandwich—Menaces and departure of the French embaſſadors.

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New ſeſſions of parliament.

WHEN there was now no remedy, and the war was actually made, though not declared, there was nothing to be done but to reſort to parliament, which, after having been twice prorogued, met on the twenty-fourth of November. The king, in his ſpeech to both houſes, did not fail to remind them, that he had proceeded thus far, in conſequence of their earneſt advice and reſolution. He informed them of the preparations he had already made, upon the ſtock of his own credit: he had, he ſaid, ſet out a fleet not inferior to any England had ever ſeen, and which had coſt him eight hundred thouſand pounds: he expreſſed his confidence in their zeal and affection to vindicate his honour and their country's rights: he took notice of a vile jealouſy, which had been ſcattered abroad by ſome ill men, that when parliament ſhould give him a noble and proportionable ſupply for the ſupport of the war, he might be induced to make a ſudden peace, and to keep the money for his own occaſions: ſo unworthy a jealouſy, he was ſure, did not deſerve an anſwer: nor would he be thought to have ſo brutiſh an inclination as to love war for war's ſake: he deſired no bleſſing more than to ſee a firm peace between all Chriſtian princes

princes and ſtates; but when he was compelled to enter into a war for the protection, honour, and benefit of his ſubjects, he would not make a peace, till he had obtained and ſecured thoſe ends, for which the war was entered into. After theſe aſſurances, his majeſty told them he had ordered a written narrative concerning the treaty and manner of proceeding with the Dutch to be laid before both houſes, as the chancellor was prevented by illneſs from attending in his place to relate thoſe particulars *.

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* Mr. Echard thinks the chancellor's indiſpoſition at this time was rather political than real, on account of his being utterly againſt the war. But the plauſibility of ſuch a conjecture will vaniſh, when we find that the vote of two millions and a half for the ſupport of the war was recommended this very ſeſſion by the chancellor and treaſurer only, and obtained by their uncommon exertions and addreſs. Thoſe two friends had, indeed, at firſt endeavoured to diſſuade the king from ſo unjuſt and ſo impolitic a war; but as ſoon as it was determined upon, and the blow ſtruck, none of thoſe, who promoted it, contributed ſo much to the carrying it on, as the former two. This may ſeem ſtrange; but it is very clearly accounted for in page 72 of the firſt volume, where the author takes notice of the following remarkable trait in the chancellor's character. "Such was his ſenſe of official duty, that if any meaſure was reſolved upon in the cabinet, however contrary to his opinion and advice, he thought himſelf bound afterwards to ſupport it in parliament with the utmoſt ſtrenuouſneſs." This, however, was a very weak excuſe for exerting all his influence in the ſupport of meaſures reprobated by his own judgment, and pregnant with ruin to his country.

The

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Vote of thanks to the city of London.

The only immediate proof, which the parliament gave of their approbation of what had been done, was a vote of thanks to the city of London * for having assisted his majesty with a loan of one hundred thousand pounds, towards the necessary equipment of the fleet. But after this there seemed to be a great suspension in the matter of supplies. It was quickly discovered, that there was not the same alacrity in either house towards a war now, as there had been when they presented their address; and that they would have been much better pleased, if any expedient had been found for a reconciliation, and if Holmes had been called to a severe account for giving the first offence by his invasion of the Dutch settlements at Cape Verde and on the coast of Guinea. This was a step, which those of his majesty's council, who were utterly against the war, had pressed with great earnestness, upon Holmes's return, and before any more mischief done; but the lenity he met with made many believe, that he had done nothing without warrant or promise of protection. As to the recent complaint against the Dutch for their breach of the treaty in not restoring the island of Poleron, their embassador disclaimed any evasive intention on the part of the States; and protested, that the not delivery of the place proceeded only for want of an order from the governor

* This vote was communicated to the city by a deputation of six lords and twelve commoners.

of

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of Batavia, which order came the next day after the Engliſh ſhip was departed; but that notice was immediately given to the Engliſh factory at Bantam, that the ſame or another Engliſh ſhip might be ſent to receive the iſland; to which the embaſſador added, "he was confident it was now in the hands of the Engliſh." Though the cauſe of the delay was juſtly ſuſpected, it is certain that the Dutch had at this time given up the iſland, in the hope of thereby preventing a rupture. When they found themſelves diſappointed, they did not let ſlip the firſt opportunity of retaking it.

But whatever room was ſtill left for negociation, too much had been done in the way of violence to expect an honourable peace, without very notable preparations for a war. This required ready money; for though nothing was more poſitively aſſerted at firſt, than that the war would maintain itſelf, and though orders had been ſpecioufly given to preſerve the Dutch prizes for that purpoſe, yet it ſoon appeared that a great part of their cargoes had been embezzled, or diſpoſed of, even before they were adjudged to be prizes; and there was too much cauſe to fear, that very little of the reſt would be applied to the public ſervice. The parliament, therefore, being privately tampered with, now again promiſed fairly, and entered upon conſultation about the ſupplies. As no time was to be loſt, the king commanded the chancellor and the

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treaſurer to have a meeting of thoſe members of the houſe of commons, with whom they had been uſed to confer, and to whom he had joined the new favourites before-mentioned, to adjuſt together what ſum ſhould be aſked, and in what manner to propoſe and conduct it.

Contrivance to obtain an unprecedented ſupply.

The meeting of thoſe perſons appointed by the king was held at Worceſter-houſe, where the chancellor and the treaſurer, both of whom had at firſt concurred in the ſame oppoſition to any immediate quarrel with the Dutch, told the others, "that there was no more debate now to be, war or no war: it was come upon us; and we were at preſent only to contrive the beſt way of carrying it on with ſucceſs, which could only be done by raiſing a great ſum of money, that the enemy might ſee, we were prepared to continue, as well as to begin it." Thoſe, on the contrary, who had manifeſted the greateſt eagerneſs for the war, ſir Harry Bennet, Mr. William Coventry, and their friends, were of opinion, "that there ſhould not be a great ſum demanded at preſent, but only ſo much as might carry out the fleet in the ſpring, and provide for the ſummer's ſervice; and then, that the war being once thoroughly entered into, another and a better ſupply might be got about Michaelmas, when there was reaſon to hope that ſome good ſucceſs would diſpoſe all men to a frank proſecution of the war."

Such

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Such a backwardneſs, on the expediency of any conſiderable demand, was leaſt of all expected from thoſe gentlemen, who had hitherto inflamed the king with an aſſurance, that he could not aſk more money of the parliament than they would readily give him, if he were engaged in this war, which the whole kingdom ſo much deſired. It was not leſs remarkable to ſee the chancellor and treaſurer, who had deprecated the rupture before the ſtriking of a blow, now that it had taken place, contending for large ſupplies to proſecute it with vigour and effect. They ſaid, "that the houſe of commons could never be in a better diſpoſition to give than at preſent: that hereafter they might grow weary and apt to find fault with the conduct, eſpecially when it ſhould be found that the country was not ſo well pleaſed with the war, as it was conceived to be; whereas now the war was begun, and the king engaged in it as much as he could be after ten battles, and all upon the deſire and promiſe of parliament, they could not refuſe to give any thing propoſed within the compaſs of that reaſon, which all underſtanding men might examine and judge of; that it was evident enough that the true ground of all the confidence, which the Dutch had, was from the opinion of the king's neceſſities and want of money, and their belief that the parliament would ſupply him very ſparingly, and not long continue ſuch an expence as a war at ſea muſt require; in which imagination they would be con-

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firmed, if, at the beginning, they ſaw parliament give him ſuch a ſum of money, as ſeemed to be implied by what the other gentlemen had ſaid."

Having thus demonſtrated the impolicy of a a ſcanty ſupply, the chancellor and treaſurer declared, " that they thought it abſolutely neceſſary that the king's friends ſhould move for ſuch a ſum as might, upon a proper eſtimate, carry on the war for a full year, that is, a ſufficiency for ſetting out the preſent fleet, and paying it off upon its return, and for ſetting out another fleet the next ſpring: if this were now done," they ſaid, " his majeſty would not be involved in importunate neceſſities the next winter, but he might calmly and deliberately conſider upon ſuch farther ſupplies, as the experience of what would be then paſt ſhould ſuggeſt to be neceſſary; and that this would give his majeſty ſuch a reputation with all his neighbours, and ſtrike ſuch a terror into his enemies, as would probably diſpoſe them to a peace." They obſerved, " that the beſt method to compute what the expence might amount to in a year, would be, by reflecting on the diſproportion of the charge we were already engaged in, and what had been eſtimated four months ſince, when the war was deſigned: that it was well known to Mr. Coventry, who had been always preſent at thoſe conferences, that it had been ſaid by the moſt experienced ſea-officers, and thoſe who had fought in former battles againſt

againſt the Dutch, *that a fleet of forty or fifty ſuch ſhips, as the king's were, would be ſtrength ſufficient to beat the whole Dutch navy out of the narrow ſeas*; and one very eminent man among them ſaid, *he would not deſire above fifty ſhips to fight with all they had, and that he was confident a greater number than fifty could never be brought to fight orderly and uſefully*; and yet that there were at preſent no fewer than fourſcore good ſhips preparing for the duke, and the charge in other particulars appeared already to amount to double the ſum that was at firſt computed." The chancellor and treaſurer therefore concluded, " that a leſs ſum than two millions and a half ought not to be propoſed, and when once propoſed, ought to be inſiſted on, and purſued without conſenting to any diminution; for that nobody could conceive it would do more than maintain the war one year, which the parliament could not refuſe to provide for in the beginning; and there being, in truth, ſo much of it already expended in the preparations and expedition the duke had made in November, when he went to ſea in purſuit of the Dutch merchantmen, and thought it neceſſary to employ as great a force as poſſible, in caſe their fleets, as was expected, ſhould come out of their harbours for the protection of their trade."

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There was not a man of thoſe, who ſhrunk from the meaſure, that did not heartily wiſh that ſum

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or a greater to be propoſed and granted; but they all proteſted, that they could not adviſe ſo prodigious a ſum ſhould be even named; and, that, as it was not proper for any of his majeſty's ſervants to make ſuch a motion, they did not know any one man, who had the courage to attempt it, or who would be perſuaded to it. The two lords continued very obſtinate, that a leſs ſum ſhould not be named for the reaſons they had given: they acknowledged that the propoſal in the houſe ought not to be made by any man, who had relation to the court, or was thought to be in any grace there that might influence him; nor yet by any gentleman of a ſmall eſtate, as it might be ſaid, he was very liberal in grants, towards which he himſelf was likely to contribute very little. It was neceſſary therefore to think of ſome members, who were looked upon as lovers of their country, and whoſe great fortunes would put them beyond the ſuſpicion of having any deſigns at court. Mr. Coventry named five or ſix perſons, of whom he ſaid the houſe had a very good opinion; but he feared that none of them could be prevailed with to undertake the buſineſs. The two lords engaged to try what might be done next morning, in order, if poſſible, not to have the motion for ſupplies deferred any longer than till the following day.

The chancellor and the treaſurer choſe out of the perſons mentioned three Norfolk gentlemen, becauſe

cauſe they were good friends and grateful to each other; and ſent to deſire an interview with them. Here the chancellor repeated the former arguments on the neceſſity of a liberal vote at the preſent juncture; and ſaid, that he had therefore deſired to confer with them on the beſt method of obtaining it, as he was well aſſured both of their good affections to the king, and the great influence their opinion would have upon the houſe. They readily promiſed their concurrence, and their utmoſt endeavours to compaſs what the king ſhould deſire. To this the chancellor replied, that ſomething more was expected from them; and then mentioning the exact ſum of two millions and a half, ſaid, that he hoped they would not only aſſent to it, but that, when the debate ſhould be entered upon, which was intended to be next day, one of them would propoſe this ſum, and the others ſecond the motion. They looked at each other for a little time, as if in ſurpriſe: at laſt one confeſſed, that though the reaſons for a liberal ſupply appeared to him very juſt, yet he did not expect the demand of ſo prodigious a ſum, which he believed had never yet been mentioned in parliament to be granted at one time: he would, however, do his beſt to anſwer any objections that ſhould be made to it, but deſired to be excuſed as to the firſt propoſing it. Another was of the ſame mind; but the third, ſir Robert Preſton, declared very frankly, "that if they believed him fit to do it, he would propoſe it the

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next morning, let other men think what they would of him for it." The two lords gave him their warmeſt thanks, and ſaid what was neceſſary to confirm him in his reſolution, and the other gentlemen in their promiſe to ſecond him.

So delicate a point having been thus ſatisfactorily ſettled, notice was given to ſir Harry Bennet and Mr. Coventry to call for the debate next day, which was entered into with readineſs, every man acknowledging the neceſſity of it, and the obligation they were under to make good their former aſſurances, but nobody venturing to name the proportion that ſhould be given. When the houſe was in a deep ſilence, expecting that motion, ſir Robert Preſton, who was no frequent ſpeaker, ſtood up; and, after mentioning conciſely their former vote, the charge of the war, and that the preſent ſupply ought to be ſuch as might terrify the enemy, as well as aſſiſt the king, he propoſed to grant his majeſty five and twenty hundred thouſand pounds for carrying on the war againſt the Dutch. The ſilence of the houſe was not broken: they ſate in amazement, until a gentleman, who was believed to wiſh well to the king, without taking notice of what had been propoſed, ſtood up and moved, that they might give his majeſty a much leſs proportion. Then the two others, as had been previouſly concerted, renewed and ſupported by their beſt arguments ſir Robert's motion, which ſeemed to be

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be entertained with the consent of many, and was contradicted by none; so that, after a short pause, no man who had any relation to the court, saying a word, the speaker put it to the question, and the affirmative made a good sound: few gave their negative aloud, and many sate silent. The vote was presently drawn into an order; and the house resolved the next day to be in a committee, to agree upon the way that should be taken for raising this money, the proportion whereof could no more be brought into debate.

This brave vote put the king in high spirits, and renewed, at least for a time, his esteem for, and confidence in the two lords, through whose advice and management it was obtained. It was above what he had expected, or, indeed, wished to be proposed; and those favourites of his, who had been at the first conference, represented the resolution of the chancellor and treasurer as impossible to be compassed, not without insinuating, that it was affected only to indispose the house to the war. Yet they did not think fit to vary from the sum, till they saw the success of the motion, which the lords were engaged to procure a fit person to make. When they found the conclusion to be such as could be wished, they fell into the opposite extreme, commending the counsel, and magnifying sir Robert Preston's merit, for having done his majesty so signal and desirable a service in such a conjuncture.

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juncture. They invited sir Robert to court; introduced him to the king, by whom he was very graciously received; amused the poor man with the hope of a baronage; and afterwards endeavoured to make him believe, that if he had not what he desired, he might impute it to the chancellor.

There appeared not more joy in the court at obtaining this vote, than upon the exchange, most of the merchants being, from prejudice, and from the narrow jealousies of trade, unskilfully inclined to a war with the Dutch, above what their true interest could invite them to, as in a short time afterwards they had cause to confess. The king sent to the lord mayor to call a common council, where some of his majesty's ministers attended, and prevailed with the city presently to furnish the king with the loan of two hundred thousand pounds, upon the credit of the vote of the house of commons. That money being in a few days paid into the hands of the treasurer of the navy, all preparations were forwarded with wonderful alacrity; and the parliament also made what haste was possible to dispatch the bill, by which the supply they had granted might be collected from the people*.

In

* At the king's desire, the old and popular method of levying the grants of parliament by subsidies was laid aside; and that of assessments, which first took its rise from the exigencies of the civil

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In the mean time, the king neglected not to apply what endeavours he could to diſpoſe foreign powers as much in his favour as any offers of intereſt might reaſonably invite them to. From France he expected only neutrality, by reaſon he knew that court had renewed an alliance with the States; but he never ſuſpected it was in ſuch a manner as would hinder the neutrality. Spain could at this time do little good, or harm; yet nothing neceſſary was left undone towards a good correſpondence with it: ſir Richard Fanſhaw was ſent to Madrid; but reſentment of the aſſiſtance given to Portugal, and of the partiality and preference ſhewn to France in the ſale of Dunkirk, prevented his meeting there with any very cordial reception. Embaſſadors were alſo ſent to the northern courts, Mr. Henry Coventry of the bedchamber to Sweden, and ſir Gilbert Talbot to Denmark, in hopes to unite them both to the king in this conjunction againſt the Dutch; or, at leaſt, to engage them to remain good friends to his majeſty, and to furniſh him with all thoſe naval ſtores, without which his fleets could not be ſupported; and, as far as was poſſible, to reſtrain the Dutch from the like ſupplies, by obtaining ſuch large contracts on account of the Engliſh, that there would not be

Various embaſſies to foreign courts.

civil war, was adopted. During this ſeſſion alſo, the clerical body gave up the expenſive privilege of taxing themſelves, and ſubmitted to the aſſeſſments of parliament in common with the laity.

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enough left for the others. How far the objects of those two embassies were accomplished will be seen in their proper place.

Treaty entered into with the bishop of Munster.

While the king was thus endeavouring to secure foreign alliances, a voluntary offer of service came from a very unexpected quarter. A Benedictine monk, who belonged to the English abbey at Lanspring in Westphalia, and who was well known to both the king and chancellor, during their residence at Cologne, called upon the latter with a letter from the bishop of Munster, the purport of which was, that, if the war against Holland was to be resolutely prosecuted by the king of England, he (the bishop) conceived, that the assistance of an ally who could infest the Dutch by land, while his majesty did the same by sea, might not be unacceptable to his majesty; and in that case, upon the answer to this letter, he would send a fit person to make proposals to the king on the subject. The matter was by the king's desire immediately laid before the select committee of his privy council. They all knew that the bishop was a warlike prince, having had command in armies before he dedicated himself to the church; and that he had a great animosity against the Dutch for having interfered in a dispute between him and his subjects about two years before, and compelled him to accept of such conditions as did not please him; but he was poor, and therefore unable to make any effectual

fectual attack upon the United Provinces, without a powerful ſupport. However, every man was of opinion, that the propoſal ought to be very kindly received, and the biſhop invited to ſend his agent; and to that purpoſe the chancellor wrote to him, and the monk was diſpatched the next day.

In a much ſhorter time than could well be expected, the monk returned, accompanied by a German baron, one of the biſhop's ſubjects, who had a letter of credit to the king, and full authority to treat and conclude according to his inſtructions, which he likewiſe preſented to his majeſty. He had alſo a recommendatory letter to the chancellor from the elector of Mentz, who declared that he believed the biſhop would be able to perform whatſoever he ſhould undertake. The baron's inſtructions were to propoſe that his majeſty would cauſe one hundred thouſand pounds to be immediately paid at Hamburgh, Cologne, or Frankfort, and ſhould promiſe to pay fifty thouſand pounds a month for three months; after which it was hoped the army would provide for its own ſupport. This being undertaken on his majeſty's part, the biſhop would be engaged, within one month after the firſt bills of exchange for the one hundred thouſand pounds ſhould be delivered into the baron's hands, that he would be in the dominions of the States General with an army of ſixteen thouſand foot, and four thouſand horſe, with which he was very confident

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fident he ſhould in a few days be poſſeſſed of Arnheim, and ſhortly after of Utrecht; and if the king's fleet came before Amſterdam, that army of the biſhop ſhould march to what quarter or place his majeſty ſhould direct.

After the king had, by particular inquiries of the baron, ſatisfied himſelf of the reaſonableneſs of the biſhop's hopes reſpecting the practicability of the propoſed attempt, the next thing to be conſidered was the ſum of money demanded, which far exceeded what the king either could, or ought to comply with. It was not an auxiliary army that was to be raiſed for the king's ſervice, nor were its conqueſts to be applied to his benefit; but it was an army raiſed to revenge the humiliations to which the biſhop himſelf had been ſubjected, and what he ſhould get muſt be on his own account, and his majeſty's hoſtility at ſea would as much facilitate the biſhop's enterprize againſt the Dutch by land, as the marching of his army might probably diſturb and diſtract their naval preparations. Yet, it could not be expected, that the biſhop could collect ſuch a body of forces without a good ſupply of money, nor keep them together without pay; and as the advantages, which his majeſty was likely to derive from ſo inviting an offer, extended themſelves to a very large proſpect, he reſolved to undertake any thing to promote it which was in his power to perform. He therefore gave his

his anſwer in writing, what ſum of money he would cauſe to be paid at once for the firſt advance, that the biſhop might begin his march, and what he would afterwards cauſe to be paid by the month. This being leſs than the baron's inſtructions would admit him to accept, he ſent an expreſs with the king's anſwer to the biſhop, the violence of whoſe enmity to the Dutch made him aſſent to the terms. The ſucceſs of this deſign, though proſecuted for ſome time with vigour, was defeated by the inſidious policy and oppoſition of France, though the biſhop, before the treaty with the king of England was concluded, had received a poſitive aſſurance from the French miniſter, that his Chriſtian majeſty would do nothing to his prejudice.

Miſmanagement of the navy ſince the king's return.

The ſtate of his majeſty's affairs abroad being put into ſuch a train, it may be proper to conſider what preparations were made at home towards carrying on this war, for which the parliament had ſo bountifully provided. It is very certain, that, if ordinary prudence had been exerted in the management and proper application of ſuch liberal ſupplies, the ſucceſs would have been anſwerable; and, at leaſt, any inconvenience from the ſudden want of money would have been prevented. But every man, who was either privy himſelf to the ſecret guidance of thoſe affairs, or who may be able to procure from others a ſincere information of the intrigues by which every meaſure was at that time regulated,

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regulated, muſt confeſs that the perſons, who contrived the war, had the entire conducting of it, and were the ſole cauſe of all the ill effects of it. They began it from motives of jealouſy, avarice, and ambition; and, in carrying it on, they conſtantly ſacrificed the honour and intereſt of the nation to the ſame ſelfiſh and pernicious paſſions. This is a truth too fully illuſtrated in almoſt every part of the conduct of adminiſtration at this melancholy period.

From the hour of the king's return, and of his being poſſeſſed of the entire government, the naval affairs were never put into any order. That province being committed to the duke of York as lord high admiral of England, was entirely engroſſed by his ſervants, eſpecially by his ſecretary Mr. Coventry, who infuſed into his highneſs the opinion, that whoever preſumed to meddle in any thing that related to the navy or admiralty, invaded his juriſdiction, and would leſſen him in the eyes of the people; and that as he was ſuperior to all men by being the king's brother, ſo being high admiral, he was to render an account to none but his majeſty: whereas, in truth, there is no officer of the crown more ſubject to the council-board, than the admiral of England, who is to give an account of all his actions, and of every branch of his office, conſtantly to the board, and to receive their orders. But there was no retrieving this authority, not only from

from the influence Mr. Coventry and others had upon the duke, but from the king's own inclination, who thought that thoſe officers who immediately depended upon himſelf, and only upon himſelf, were more at his devotion, than they who were obliged to give an account to any other ſuperior. His majeſty had alſo, from the time of his firſt going to France, been accuſtomed to no diſcourſe more, than to the under-valuing of the privy council, as if it ſhadowed the king too much, and uſurped too much of his authority, and too often ſuperſeded his commands. In converſations of this kind, the queen his mother had always ſome fatal inſtances to give of the authority, which in particular caſes the council had aſſumed againſt the late king's judgment; all which, being the ſubject of every day, made ſo deep an impreſſion as could never be effaced, and rendered the choice and nomination of privy councillors leſs regarded, ſince they were to be no more adviſed with afterwards than before. Another argument that uſed to be as frequently inſiſted upon by the queen, and with more heat and indignation, was the little reſpect that by the law or cuſtom of England was paid to the younger ſons of the crown; and though there was no body preſent at thoſe converſations, who knew any thing of the law or cuſtom in ſuch caſes, yet all that the queen ſaid was taken for granted; and not only the duke but the king himſelf conceived a manifeſt prejudice to the nation

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in that reſpect: it was eaſily agreed that the model of France was in thoſe and other caſes much preferable; and that model was afterwards obſerved upon too many occaſions.

All offices and commiſſions ſold to the higheſt bidder.

This being the ſtate and temper of the royal family, when the king was recalled, the very next morning after the fleet came to Scheveling, the duke went on board, and took poſſeſſion of it as lord high admiral; and his ſecretary provided new commiſſions for all the officers then in command, for which it is probable they paid him very liberally, as with him the cuſtom began of demanding five pounds for every warrant ſigned by the duke, though the fee to former ſecretaries had never exceeded twenty ſhillings. Mr. Coventry, who was utterly unacquainted with all the rules and cuſtoms of the ſea, and knew none of the officers, but was much courted by all on account of the place he filled, made choice of captain Penn, whom the king knighted as ſoon as he came on board, and with whom the ſecretary made a faſt friendſhip, being guided by him in every thing. Penn had riſen from the rank of a common ſailor to the higheſt command under Cromwell, with whom he was in great favour, till he failed in the enterprize againſt St. Domingo, when he was admiral at ſea, and Venables had the command of the land forces. At their return to England, they were both impriſoned in the Tower, and never after employed by

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by the protector *. Upon Cromwell's death, Penn had an appointment again at ſea, and was at this time under Montague, when he went to attend the king. By the preſent change of the government, the places of all the officers belonging to the navy, the dock-yards, and the whole admiralty became void, and were all, except thoſe of the three ſuperior officers of the navy, to be ſupplied by the duke, that is, by Mr. Coventry, who by the advice of Penn, his only confidant in the brokage,

* Cromwell, notwithſtanding the ſucceſs of his intrigues to obtain the ſupreme power, was far from poſſeſſing any depth, or extent of political knowledge. He was always the dupe of French artifice, and was eaſily perſuaded by the ſubtle Mazarin to make war upon Spain, ſoon after his advancement to the protectorſhip. Towards the cloſe of the year 1654, he ſent out a fleet of thirty ſhips under Penn, with about five thouſand ſoldiers commanded by Venables. Their orders, which were ſealed, and to be opened at a certain latitude, contained very circumſtantial directions for the attack of St. Domingo, the capital of the Spaniſh ſettlement in Hiſpaniola. At the approach of the Engliſh fleet, the Spaniards abandoned the town; but Venables, inſtead of landing his troops, according to his inſtructions, within a mile of the place, diſembarked them ten leagues more to the weſtward. This gave the inhabitants time to recover from their firſt conſternation. They returned to the town, and put it in a poſture of defence. The Engliſh troops, when they approached Domingo, were ſo fatigued by a long march, and by the exceſſive heat, beſides the want of all neceſſary refreſhments, that they were eaſily repulſed, and forced with conſiderable loſs to retreat to their ſhips. But before their return home, they took the iſland of Jamaica, which probably ſoftened in ſome ſmall degree the violence of Cromwell's indignation and reſentment.

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conferred them upon thoſe who would give moſt money, without the leaſt regard to any other pretenſions. While Coventry purſued this ſyſtem of the moſt bare-faced venality, he took care to ſecure a proper number of friends near the duke's perſon, and to leſſen the odium that he would incur by engroſſing to himſelf the whole of thoſe immenſe profits, or rather bribes. As the ſums paid for their appointments by many of the principal officers in the dock-yards were conſiderable, and muſt attract notice, ſome being obliged to give eight hundred, and others a thouſand pounds for their places, he had the ſkill to move the duke to beſtow the fees ariſing from one of thoſe lucrative appointments on ſome perſon of his houſehold, ſir Charles Berkeley for inſtance, and the money paid for another place upon another of his ſervants, and ſome to be divided between two or three; by which means all the duke's family were laid under obligations, and retained to juſtify him, and even the duke looked upon it as a generoſity in Mr. Coventry to accommodate his fellow-ſervants with what he might have aſked, or kept for himſelf. But it was the beſt huſbandry he could have uſed; for by this means all men's mouths were ſtopt, while the ſmaller ſums for a multitude of offices of all kinds were reſerved for himſelf with leſs notice, and jealouſy, though they amounted to much more than any officer under the king could get by all the perquiſites of his place for many years.

Among

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Among the many irreparable inconveniences and miſchiefs which reſulted from this corrupt manner of ſelling commiſſions to the higheſt bidder, and of filling up all the vacant offices in the navy without the ſmalleſt conſideration of any man's character or merit, one grew quickly viſible and notorious in the ſtealing and embezzling all ſorts of things out of the ſhips, even when they were in actual ſervice: but when they returned from any voyages, it was much worſe; for then great quantities of various ſtores, which ought to have been delivered back into the proper offices appointed to receive them, were embezzled and ſold, and very often ſold to the king himſelf for the fitting out of other ſhips. When this was diſcovered, as ſometimes happened, and the criminal perſon apprehended, it was alledged by him, as a defence or excuſe, that he had paid ſo dear for his place, that he could not maintain himſelf and his family without practiſing ſuch ſhifts: yet none of thoſe fellows were ever brought to exemplary juſtice; and moſt of them were reſtored to their employments. Thus was the public ſervice injured, and the ſtate plundered with impunity, through the corruption of one individual, unhappily placed at the head of ſo great a department.

Stores embezzled with impunity.

The ſame motives prompted Mr. Coventry to recommend and bring about a change in the lord high admiral's eſtabliſhed council, to the detri-

New modelling of the navy-board.

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ment of the ſervice, and the increaſe of the public expence. The three ſuperior officers of the navy were poſſeſſed of their places by patents under the great ſeal of England before the king's return: they were the natural council of the lord high admiral, and uſed of courſe to attend him regularly once a week to render an account of all the ſtate of the office, to give their advice upon any occaſion, and to receive his orders. Now becauſe thoſe three depended not on the ſecretary, he wiſhed, as much as poſſible, to leſſen their conſequence. He had alſo a particular animoſity to one of them, ſir George Carteret, who, beſides being treaſurer of the navy, was vice-chamberlain of the king's houſehold, and a member of the privy council. Mr. Coventry, therefore, ſuggeſted to the duke, that, in regard of the multiplicity of buſineſs, much more than in former times, when thoſe officers and that model for the government of the navy had been eſtabliſhed, his royal highneſs would propoſe to the king to make an addition by commiſſioners of ſome other perſons always to ſit with thoſe three officers with equal authority, and to ſign all bills with them. He farther obſerved that no new expence need be incurred by ſuch a meaſure, as the perquiſites of the treaſurer of the navy were now ſo greatly increaſed, that he might very well afford out of his fees a handſome ſalary for the commiſſioners. The duke liked the propoſal, and mentioning it to the king at the council-board, where nobody

nobody thought fit to make any objections, his majesty gave his consent, and appointed to the proposed office four persons recommended by the duke, namely, the lord Berkley, sir John Lawson, sir William Penn, and sir George Askew, to whom Mr. Coventry himself was afterwards added, with a pension of five hundred pounds a year to each. But these pensions, which were so inconsiderately granted on the presumption of having them paid out of the treasurer of the navy's fees, became directly an additional charge on the revenue, for it was found that those fees had been secured under the great seal to the treasurer of the navy, and could not be taken from him with decency, or justice. To shew how little the public service was considered in this business, it will be sufficient to say, that three of the new commissioners were likely to be engaged at sea in case of a war, and therefore incapable of any duty at the navy-board: Mr. Coventry had business enough in his own office, if properly attended to; and the only one who had leisure, that was lord Berkeley, neither understood any thing that related to the employment, nor gave himself any trouble about it; but after he had enjoyed the pension about a year, he procured leave to sell the place to Mr. Thomas Hervey for three thousand pounds.

Silly blustering of the court.

This was the state of the navy before the war with Holland was entered into. Let us next

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ſee what alterations took place, or what other preparations were made, and what counſels were moſt adhered to for the better conduct of this war. It is certain, that a clear and impartial view and reflection upon what was then ſaid and done, gave diſcerning men an unhappy preſage of what would follow. There was no diſcourſe in the court, after the two millions and a half had been voted, but of giving the law to the whole trade of Chriſtendom, and of making all ſhips, that ſhould paſs by or through the narrow ſeas, to pay an impoſition to the king, like the tolls paid to Denmark by all veſſels paſſing through the Sound into the Baltic. The king and duke took no trouble to diſcountenance and ſuppreſs this impertinent talk, which was ſo likely to be reported abroad, and to increaſe the number of their enemies. But this bad effect was ſtill more promoted by ſome new regulations.

Unjuſt rules for the adjudication of prizes.

Commiſſioners were appointed to reſide in the principal port-towns for the ſale of all prize-goods; and thoſe commiſſioners were choſen out of ſuch members of the houſe of commons as had given proofs of their readineſs to oblige the king, or who promiſed to do ſo, and to whom liberal ſalaries were aſſigned. There were other commiſſioners named to decide all appeals from the ſentences given by the judge of the admiralty, or his deputies; and theſe were privy councillors, the earl of Lauderdale, lord Aſhley, and ſecretary Bennet, whom

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whom the king could truſt to take care of his profit. But then the rules, which were preſcribed to judge by, were ſuch as were neither agreeable to former precedents, nor acknowledged to be juſt by the practice of any neighbouring nation, and ſuch as would make all ſhips, which traded for Holland, from what country ſoever, lawful prize; which, it was foreſeen, would bring complaints from all places, as it did as ſoon as the war began. One of thoſe rules was, that if above three Dutch mariners were found aboard any ſhip that was taken, no farther proof ſhould be required for condemning it. Thus Dutchmen, who ran from their own country to avoid fighting, and put themſelves on board merchant ſhips of any other country, made thoſe ſhips in which they ſerved, lawful prize, by a rule which no other nation knew, nor would ſubmit to. However, French and Spaniard, Swede and Dane were in this reſpect treated alike, whilſt their embaſſadors made loud complaints every day to the king and the council, againſt ſuch injuſtice and rapine, without any other remedy than references to the admiralty, and then to the lords commiſſioners of appeal, which always increaſed the charge, and ſometimes the indignity. Above all the Hanſe towns, (which had large exemptions and privileges granted to them by former kings, and confirmed by his preſent majeſty) had the worſt luck. Their ſhips as well as their language were ſo like the Dutch, as not to be eaſily diſtinguiſhed; ſo that not

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not one of their veſſels was met with, from what part of the world ſoever it came, or whither ſoever it was bound, but it was ſeized; and if the evidence, that any of the ſhips ſo taken belonged to the Hanſe towns, was ſuch that there could be no colour to retain them as prizes, but that they muſt be releaſed, they always carried with them ſad remembrances of the company they had been in.

Bad effects of encouraging privateers.

This ſpirit of injuſtice and rapacity was greatly promoted by a reſolution taken almoſt as ſoon as the war was thought of, *that all poſſible encouragement ſhould be given to privateers*; that is, to as many as would take commiſſions from the admiral, to ſet out veſſels of war, as they call them, to take prizes from the enemy. Now the perſons, who ſolicit ſuch a licenſe, are always a people whom no articles or obligations can reſtrain from all the villainy they can act; and who never fail to bring great ſcandal, and, it is to be feared, a great curſe upon the juſteſt war. *A ſail, a ſail* is the word with them: friend, or foe is the ſame: they ſeize all they can maſter, and run with it to any obſcure place where they can ſell it, and never wait for the ceremony of an adjudication. But beſides the reproach and diſgrace brought by this claſs of men upon the whole government for defect of juſtice, the prejudice, which reſulted thence to the public, and to the carrying on the ſervice, is unſpeakable. All ſeamen ran to them; for though ſuch as belonged

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to the king's ſhips were allowed prize-money, over and above their wages, yet there was great difference between the condition of the one and the other. In the king's fleet they might gain well; but they were ſure of blows: nothing could be got there without fighting: with the privateers there was rarely fighting: they took all who could make little reſiſtance, and fled from all who were too ſtrong for them. The privateers were of courſe always well manned, when the king's ſhips were compelled to ſtay many days for want of men, who were raiſed by preſſing and with great difficulty. But notwithſtanding ſo many obvious injuries and miſchiefs occaſioned by thoſe privateers, whoever ventured to ſpeak againſt them, upon any caſe whatſoever, was thought to have no regard for the duke's profit, nor any deſire to weaken the enemy.

Commiſſion to prevent the prize money from being carried to the public account.

In all former wars at ſea, as there was great care taken to appoint commiſſioners for the ſale of prize goods, who underſtood the value of the commodities they had to ſell, ſo there was equal ſtrictneſs uſed in bringing the receivers to as punctual an account, as any other of the king's receivers are bound to make; and in compelling them to pay all the money they had received into the exchequer, that it might be iſſued out to the treaſurer of the navy, or to other offices for the expence of the war. One great argument in the firſt conſultations upon this war was, that it would ſupport itſelf;

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itſelf; and that, after one good fleet ſhould be ſet out to beat the Dutch, (for that was never thought worthy of a doubt) the prizes, which would every day after be taken, would plentifully do all the reſt, beſides the great ſum that the Dutch would give to purchaſe their peace, and the yearly rent they would give for the liberty of fiſhing; with all which it was not thought fit to allow them to keep above a certain number of ſhips of war, limited to ſo many tons, and to ſo many guns, with many particulars of that nature, carefully digeſted by the promoters of the quarrel. But now, after the noble ſupply voted by parliament, there was no more danger of want of money; and many diſcourſes there were, that the prize-money might be better diſpoſed of in rebuilding the king's houſes, and ſeveral other good uſes, which would occur. The king forbore to ſpeak any more of appointing receivers and treaſurers for that purpoſe, when all other officers, who were judged neceſſary for the ſervice, were already named; and the lord treaſurer, who by his office ſhould have the recommendation of ſuch perſons to the king, had made out a liſt of men, who, in his judgment, were worthy of the truſt. But private intrigue had ſettled the matter otherwiſe. A commiſſion was made out by his majeſty's order, to conſtitute the lord Aſhley treaſurer of all the money, that ſhould be raiſed by the ſale of all prizes, which were or ſhould be taken in the preſent war, with power to appoint all

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all such officers as should be necessary for the service; and that he should account for all monies so received to the king himself and to no other person whatsoever, and pay and issue out all those monies, which he should receive, in such manner as his majesty should appoint by warrant under his sign manual, and by no other warrant; and that he should be free and exempt from accompting to the exchequer. When this commission was sent to the chancellor to be passed under the great seal, he delayed signing it, till he remonstrated with the king on the dangerous consequences of such an innovation, which, he said, was not only without a precedent, and highly derogatory to the lord treasurer, but must be destructive to his majesty's service, by throwing open a door to fraud and cozenage, without any means of prevention, or remedy. He also expostulated with the lord Ashley himself on the subject; but to no purpose. The king in a short time sent a positive order to seal the commission, which the chancellor could no longer refuse, though he did it with the more trouble, because he knew that few men could have before entertained a worse opinion of lord Ashley's integrity than the king himself. But that lord was now got into friendships, which could remove, or reconcile all prejudices: he was fast linked to sir Harry Bennet and Mr. Coventry, in a league offensive and defensive, the same friends, and the same enemies: he had also gained an entire trust with lady Castlemaine,

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maine, who very well underſtood the benefit ſuch an officer would be to her: nor was it difficult to perſuade the king (who thought himſelf more rich in having one thouſand pounds in his cloſet, than fifty thouſand pounds in his exchequer) how many conveniences he would find in having ſo much money at his own immediate diſpoſal, without the formality of privy ſeals, and other men's warrants, and the indecency and miſchief that, he thought, would attend a formal account of his gifts and expences, which ſhould be known only to himſelf.

Nightly meetings at lady Caſtlemaine's.

The chancellor's oppoſition in this affair ſerved only to inflame lord Aſhley with the moſt implacable animoſity towards him, and to give his other enemies an opportunity of leſſening him in the king's eſteem by putting the worſt conſtruction on his motives. The nightly meetings at lady Caſtlemaine's had of late made him more the ſubject of diſcourſe; and ſince the appointment of the new ſecretary, as I have noticed elſewhere*, they had taken more liberty than before to talk of what was done in council. The duke of Buckingham pleaſed himſelf and the company by mimicking the looks and actions of all the perſons who ſpoke there; and in this ridiculous exhibition the chancellor was ſure to have a full part. In the height of mirth, if the king ſaid he would go ſuch a journey, or do

* See page 45.

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ſuch a trivial thing on the morrow, ſome of the party would lay a wager, that he would not do it; and when he aſked why, it was anſwered, "that the chancellor would not let him." Then another would proteſt, "that he thought there was no ground for that imputation; though he could not deny, that it was generally believed abroad, that his majeſty was entirely and implicitly governed by the chancellor." This was touching his majeſty upon the tendereſt ſtring; for though his unconquerable indolence and his eaſineſs of belief made him the conſtant dupe of deſigning and preſumptuous men, yet he was extremely jealous of the ſuppoſed independency of his own will, and could not endure the leaſt ſuſpicion of his being governed by the dictates or counſels of another. When ſuch things were inſinuated, he never failed to declare in a great paſſion, that the chancellor had no more credit with him than any other man; and certainly, his majeſty was afterwards more upon his guard againſt ſhewing even any outward marks of particular reſpect for the chancellor's advice.

Extraordinary ſcheme of toleration defeated.

Beſides the unwillingneſs manifeſted by the chancellor to comply with his majeſty's deſires upon this late occaſion, there was another inſtance of his oppoſition, which having defeated a favourite project in parliament, ſank very deeply into the king's mind, and almoſt cancelled the remembrance

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brance of an old ſervant's fidelity and zeal in ſo many other inſtances. In the former ſeſſion, lord Aſhley out of his indifference in matters of religion, and ſir Harry Bennet out of his good will to the Roman catholics, had drawn in the lord privy ſeal, whoſe intereſt was moſt in the preſbyterians, to propoſe to the king a particular ſcheme of toleration, for which they offered two motives. The firſt was the probability of a war with the Dutch, in which caſe the perſecution of people at home on the ſcore of religion would be very inconvenient and might prove miſchievous. The other argument was, that the fright men were thrown into by the bill againſt conventicles, and the warmth expreſſed by parliament with reference to the church, had ſo prepared all ſorts of non-conformiſts, that they would compound for liberty of conſcience at any reaſonable rates; and that by this means a good yearly revenue might be raiſed to the king, and a firm concord and tranquility eſtabliſhed in the kingdom, if power were granted by the parliament to his majeſty to diſpenſe with the penalty of the laws in favour of ſuch perſons as he knew to be peaceably affected, and deſirous only of liberty to follow the religion moſt agreeable to their conſcience. The recommenders of this new ſcheme had prepared a ſchedule, in which they computed what every Roman catholic would be willing to pay yearly for ſuch a diſpenſation, and ſo of every

other

other ſect; which, upon the eſtimate they made, would indeed have amounted to a very conſiderable ſum. CHAP. II. 1665.

The exerciſe of the diſpenſing power had long been one of the fond objects of the king's wiſhes. I have before ſhewn the failure of an attempt which he made to obtain it by the advice of the Roman catholic junto at the queen-mother's; but parliament at that time proved refractory *. He was now flattered with the hope of their acquieſcence: he liked the arguments in favour of this new project very well; and expreſſed his eagerneſs to ſee it thrown into the form of a bill. This was quickly done, and the bill prepared in a very conciſe manner, without any mention of other advantage to grow from it than the peace and quiet of the kingdom, and an entire reference to the king's own judgment and diſcretion in diſpenſing ſuch indulgences. The whole being fully approved of by his majeſty, he reſolved to impart it to the chancellor and treaſurer, from whom it had been hitherto kept a profound ſecret. As the chancellor was then afflicted with the gout, the king commanded the ſelect committee to meet at Worceſter-houſe; and thither likewiſe went the lord privy-ſeal, and lord Aſhley, who had never before been preſent at thoſe meetings. The king briefly ex-

* See page 4.

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plained the occaſion of the conference, and cauſed the draught of the bill to be read, which was done, and ſuch reaſons given by thoſe who promoted it as they thought fit. The chancellor and treaſurer uſed many arguments to diſſuade the king from proſecuting it, but what the others ſaid prevailed more; and his majeſty declared, "that the bill ſhould be preſented to the houſe of peers, as from him, and that he hoped none of his ſervants, who knew his mind as well as every body there did, would oppoſe it, but either be abſent or ſilent;" to which the chancellor and treaſurer anſwered, "that they could not abſent themſelves purpoſely; and they hoped, that if they ſhould be preſent, his majeſty would excuſe them for ſpeaking according to their judgment and conſcience." The king ſeemed much diſſatisfied; but this refuſal was more pleaſing to the other lords than their concurrence.

In a few days after the bill was preſented in the houſe of peers by the lord privy-ſeal, as by the king's direction and approbation, and thereupon had the firſt reading; but as ſoon as the ſecond reading was propoſed, the treaſurer and many of the biſhops ſpoke againſt it with ſome aſperity, the chancellor being ſtill confined in his chamber. However, it was moved, that ſince it was averred to be with the king's privity, it would be a thing unheard of to deny it a ſecond reading; but that there

there might be no danger of its being read in a thin houſe, it was ordered that it ſhould be read the ſecond time upon a day named, at ten of the clock in the morning, with which all were ſatisfied.

In the mean time great pains were taken to perſuade particular men to approve of it, and ſome of the biſhops were ſharply reprehended for oppoſing the king's prerogative, with ſome intimation, that if they perſiſted in that obſtinacy, they ſhould repent it. Inſinuations were even thrown out that it had been peruſed by the chancellor, and that he was not againſt it, the report of which obliged him to attend in his place on the appointed day; and after the ſecond reading of the bill, he was of courſe to propoſe the commitment of it. Several of the biſhops and the lord treaſurer continued their former oppoſition. Many others in like manner ſpoke fiercely againſt the bill, as a project to get money at the price of religion. The lord privy-ſeal, either obſerving the countenance of the houſe, or unwilling to venture his reputation in the enterprize, had given over the game the firſt day, and now remained ſilent. But lord Aſhley adhered firmly to his point; ſpoke often, and with great ſharpneſs of wit; and had a cadence in his words and pronunciation that drew attention. Among other remarks, he ſaid, "it was the king's misfortune, that a matter of ſo great concern to him, and ſuch a pre-

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rogative as would perhaps be found inherent in him, without any declaration of parliament, ſhould be ſupported only by ſuch weak men as himſelf, who ſerved his majeſty at a diſtance; while the great officers of the crown thought fit to oppoſe it, which he the more wondered at, becauſe nobody knew better than they the king's unſhaken firmneſs in his religion, that had reſiſted and vanquiſhed ſo many great temptations, and that his majeſty therefore could not be thought unworthy of a greater truſt with reference to it, than he would have by this bill."

This laſt reflection called up the chancellor, who declared, "that no man ſhould ſay more, if it it were neceſſary or pertinent, of the king's conſtancy in his religion, than he was diſpoſed to do; and that, if the queſtion were, how far his majeſty might be truſted in that point, he would make no ſcruple in averring, that he thought him more worthy to be truſted than any man alive. But," he ſaid, "the degree of confidence juſtly due to the king was not the point of debate in a bill, which confounded all notions of religion, and erected a chaos of policy to undermine both religion and government; ſo that the queſtion was not, whether the king were worthy of that truſt, but whether that truſt were worthy of the king." He added, "that it had been no new thing for kings to diveſt themſelves of many particular rights and powers,

powers, which they found expoſed them to great trouble and vexation; and he thought it a very unreaſonable thing to commit a truſt to the king, which he could not be ſuppoſed to execute himſelf, and yet muſt ſubject him to daily and hourly importunities, the uneaſineſs of which would be the more ſenſibly felt by his majeſty, to whom, ſuch was the great bounty and generoſity of his nature, nothing was ſo painful as to be obliged to deny." As the chancellor's arguments ſeemed to have moſt weight with the majority of the houſe, though a great many, beſides the catholic lords, would have conſented to the bill, it was agreed, that there ſhould be no queſtion put for the commitment, which was the moſt civil way of rejecting it.

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The king was infinitely troubled at the ill ſucceſs of this bill, which he had been aſſured would paſs, notwithſtanding the oppoſition that was expected. He even expreſſed in very fretful terms his diſſatisfaction at the chancellor's and treaſurer's behaviour in particular, after they had been made acquainted with his ſentiments on the ſubject; and there were not wanting perſons to inſinuate, that pride alone had prompted thoſe two lords to ſhew their power and credit in diverting the houſe from gratifying the king in a matter which was not of their contrivance. The chancellor alſo having, in the vehemence of debate, let fall ſome unwary

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expreſſions, and ſaid in his remarks on the wildneſs of the bill, "that it was *ſhip-money* in religion, that nobody could know the end of it, or where it would reſt, and that if it were paſſed, Dr. Goſſe, or any apoſtate from the church of England might be made a biſhop or archbiſhop here, all oaths, ſtatutes, and ſubſcriptions being diſpenſed with;" thoſe words were reported by his enemies to the king, with gloſſes and reflections very much to the chancellor's diſadvantage.

Religion turned into ridicule.

Another miſchief reſulted alſo from this unhappy debate, which was the prejudice and diſlike his majeſty took to the biſhops, on account of their objections to the bill. He never after treated any of them with the reſpect he had done formerly, and often ſpoke of them too ſlightly; which eaſily encouraged others not only to mention their perſons very negligently, but their function, and religion itſelf, as an invention to impoſe upon the free judgments and underſtandings of men. What was preached in the pulpit was commented upon and derided in the chamber; preachers were acted with curious mimickry; and their ſermons vilified, as laboured diſcourſes, made only to diſplay their parts, and to gain praiſe and preferment. Such were the common ſubjects of the mirth and wit of the court; and all ſerious perſons who ſaw, or heard of ſuch prophaneneſs, could not help regarding it as an ill preſage, that, whilſt all warlike preparations

parations were making in abundance ſuitable to the occaſion, there ſhould be ſo little preparation of ſpirit for a war againſt an enemy, who might be without ſome of our virtues, but aſſuredly were without any of our vices.

First appearance of the plague.

There began now to appear another enemy, much more formidable than the Dutch, and more difficult to be ſtruggled with, which was the plague *. It broke out in the winter, and made ſuch an early progreſs in the ſpring, that though the weekly bills of mortality did not riſe high, and though the contagion ſeemed confined to obſcure alleys, and to the poorer ſorts of people, yet old men, who well remembered in what manner the

* Mrs. Macauley makes the following reflection on this dreadful calamity: "Though the preſumption of calling the misfortunes, to which all men are liable, the judgments of an offended God, is very uncharitable, irreligious, and unbecoming the philoſophic wiſdom of an hiſtorian, yet it is natural to obſerve, that as this heavy viſitation, which the Engliſh ſeverely experienced in the beginning of the late king's reign, and from which they had been almoſt totally free during the adminiſtration of the Long Parliament, ſo ſtrongly contradicted the aſſertions of God's peculiar countenance to the preſent frame of government, and the conduct of public affairs, that it began to make the orthodox to doubt, whether founding titles were the preferable objects of divine favour; and whether piety, juſtice, law, order, and diſintereſted affection to the commonweal were not at leaſt as acceptable to the purity of the deity, as lewdneſs, oppreſſion, prophaneneſs, and ſelf-idolatry."

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laſt great plague, about forty years before, firſt broke out, and the progreſs it afterwards made, foretold a terrible ſummer; and many of them removed their families out of the city to country habitations, when their neighbours laughed at their fears, and thought they might have ſtaid without danger. But it ſoon appeared that they had done wiſely. In March the peſtilence ſpread ſo much that the parliament was very willing to part, which was likewiſe the more neceſſary, as ſo many of the members of the houſe of commons were appointed to different employments relating to the war, which required their immediate attendance. For though the fleet was not yet gone out, yet there were many prizes daily brought in, beſides the firſt ſeizure of the wine fleet, valued at above an hundred thouſand pounds, in all which great loſs was ſuſtained through the abſence of thoſe who ſhould puniſh the delinquency and rapine of the officers as well as common men. As ſoon therefore as the bill was paſſed both houſes for the good aid they had voted, his majeſty gave it his aſſent, and prorogued the parliament till the September following, declaring that, if it pleaſed God to extinguiſh, or allay the fierceneſs of the plague, he ſhould be glad to meet them then, by which time they ſhould have notice by proclamation, that they might not hazard themſelves.

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War declared againſt the Dutch.

The parliament being thus prorogued, and war having been formally declared *, every exertion was uſed to haſten out the fleet, not only in order to be before the enemy, but becauſe while the ſhips were in port, it was impoſſible to keep the ſailors from going on ſhore, by which they might bring the plague on board with them. Had the plan of equipment, which was at firſt propoſed, been adhered to, the fleet would have been ready to ſail long before; but Mr. Coventry, who by his contrivance of commiſſioners was enabled to direct all the reſolutions of the navy-board, ſeemed ſolicitous only to enlarge the preparations, and to increaſe the expence by all the ways poſſible. The eſtimates were always made out in conſultation with the ſea-captains before named, ſir John Lawſon, ſir George Aſkew, and ſir William Penn, all men of profeſſional experience. Lawſon was greatly ſuperior to the reſt in ſkill and judgment: he always ſpoke clearly, and pertinently, but not pertinaciouſly enough, when he was contradicted. Aſkew was a gentleman, but had kept ill company too long, which had blunted his underſtanding, if it had ever been ſharp: he was of few words, yet ſpoke to the purpoſe, and to be eaſily underſtood. Penn, though poſſeſſed of leſs abilities than either, had a great mind to appear better bred, and to

* The declaration was dated the twenty-ſecond of February, but not publiſhed till the ſecond of March.

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ſpeak like a gentleman: he had got many good words, which he uſed at adventure: he was very formal, and ſpoke leiſurely, but much, and left the matter more intricate and perplext than he found it. He was entirely governed by Mr. Coventry, who conſtantly attended at theſe conſultations, and who learned enough from Penn to enter himſelf into the debate, and to croſs what was not agreeable to his own fancy. It alſo belonged to Mr. Coventry's province to reduce into writing whatever was reſolved upon in order to be laid before the king; and as his majeſty deſired, merely for the ſake of form, to confer with the lord treaſurer upon every new demand for the iſſuing of money, the duke always brought with him to ſuch conferences the ſea-officers, and Mr. Coventry, who ſpoke much more than any of the reſt, and often what the others never thought of, though they dared not contradict him. If ſir John Lawſon at any time ventured to ſay, that Mr. Coventry muſt have miſunderſtood them, and put that into writing which had not been propoſed; the latter inſiſted upon his own exactneſs, and would continue diſputing it, till the other yielded. Every conference raiſed the charge very much; and what they propoſed yeſterday as enough, was to-day made twice as much; ſo that there could be no poſſible computation of the expence. The number of ſhips in the firſt eſtimate was doubled before they were ready to put to ſea; and the king was very willing,

ling, upon the reaſons ſtated to him by the duke, reſpecting the danger of the plague from a longer continuance in harbour, that they ſhould ſail as ſoon as poſſible.

New creations.

Before the duke's final departure for the fleet, there were two perſons whom he and the king deſired to make remarkable by ſome extraordinary inſtance of their kindneſs, ſir Charles Berkeley, equally the favourite of both, and ſir Harry Bennet, for whom the duke had, indeed, no great regard, but who enjoyed a conſiderable ſhare of his majeſty's affection and confidence. Sir Charles had been lately created an Iriſh viſcount; but this was not enough, without an Engliſh title; and ſecretary Bennet muſt alſo be made a lord. The king had deferred theſe creations till the parliament ſhould be prorogued, leſt the conferring of theſe titles ſhould raiſe the appetites of others to make application, from which his majeſty had hitherto defended himſelf by declaring that he would make no more lords. But the parliament was no ſooner prorogued, than he reſolved to execute his purpoſe; and ſo lord Fitzharding was created earl of Falmouth, before he had one foot of land in the world; and Bennet, who had no more eſtate than the other, was created lord Arlington, taking his title from a little farm that formerly belonged to his father, at a village called Harlington between London and Uxbridge. The king could not avoid conferring

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conferring at the ſame time the like honours on two others, Mr. Frechville, a gentleman of Derbyſhire, and Mr. Arundel of Trerife in Cornwall, to whom his majeſty was bound by many obligations and repeated promiſes; but he declared at the ſame time, that no importunity ſhould prevail with him to make any more lords, till the preſent number, which was become a grievance, ſhould be leſſened.

Theſe creations were no ſooner over, than the new earl of Falmouth, being a man of fearleſs courage, and thinking himſelf obliged not to quit the duke, when expoſed to ſo much danger, ſet out with his royal highneſs to join the fleet. Many other noblemen and perſons of quality went as volunteers, and were diſtributed into the ſeveral ſhips with much countenance by the duke, after taking as many on board his own ſhip as could be done with convenience. The duke of Buckingham, from the firſt mention of the war, which he promoted all he could, had declared that he would make one in it; and now deſired the command of a ſhip, though he had never been at ſea. On being refuſed this, he entered as volunteer on board a flag ſhip, the captain whereof was in his favour; and then deſired that in reſpect of his quality, and being a privy councillor, he might be preſent in all councils of war. As none were admitted to theſe councils but flag-officers, his royal highneſs

highneſs poſitively refuſed to gratify him in this point alſo, which the duke of Buckingham thought to be ſuch a perſonal diſobligation as might well excuſe him for declining the enterprize. Pretending therefore that he appealed to the king in point of right, he left the fleet, and returned to the ſhore to complain: and we return back to the view of other particulars. CHAP. II. 1665.

Duplicity of the French court.

During all thoſe hoſtile preparations the French embaſſador Monſieur Cominges remained in England, pretending to be ready to finiſh the treaty of commerce; but formalized ſo much upon every article, (though nothing was demanded but what had been granted to Cromwell) that it was concluded he wanted power, though much was imputed to the capriciouſneſs of his own nature. As ſoon as the war was evidently determined upon, the king of France ſent two other embaſſadors to be joined in commiſſion with the former. The one was the duke of Verneuil, and the other monſieur Courtine, a maſter of requeſts, and much the quicker man of the three, and upon whoſe parts and addreſs moſt of the buſineſs depended. At their firſt audience they ſaid, "that the purport of their embaſſy was to mediate a peace, of which the United Provinces having profeſſed a very great deſire, their maſter hoped he ſhould find the ſame good inclinations here; and if he might be informed what would ſatisfy his Britannic majeſty, he

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he did not doubt but that he ſhould perſuade the States to ſubmit to it." With theſe general declarations, and without delivering any memorial in writing, the embaſſadors contented themſelves for many months, as if their buſineſs was only that the Dutch embaſſador, who ſtill continued in London, might know and ſend word to his maſters, that they had begun their mediation. But in their private diſcourſes they ſeemed to make ſome kind of apology for being ſent, implying as if the extraordinary importunity of the Dutch had prevailed with the king their maſter to undertake this mediation, and which he did the rather upon their promiſe to yield to any thing he ſhould adviſe; but he was far from deſiring that his majeſty might not receive ample ſatisfaction in whatſoever he required. They took care at the ſame time to perſuade the Dutch embaſſador, as appeared by his letter to the Hague, that they were very intent upon, and had much advanced the treaty *.

It

* France was at this time playing a double game with Holland and England; and under the ſhew of friendly mediation, only aimed at widening the breach between both, that they might ſo far exhauſt themſelves in a war, as to render them incapable of any oppoſition to the ambitious deſigns of Lewis. It appears from the count d'Eſtrade's negotiations, that the French monarch was now preparing for the ſeizure of Flanders, "that laſting beauty," to uſe ſir William Temple's metaphor, "for which he had an incurable paſſion; but as ſhe was not kind enough to conſent to his deſires, he meditated to commit a rape upon

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It was in April that the Duke went to ſea; and from the day of his departure till the day of battle, letters and orders continually came from him for an addition of more ſhips, upon intelligence received of the increaſed ſtrength of the enemy. In theſe diſpatches, Mr. Coventry took care to add from himſelf, that whilſt the king's brother ventured his own perſon, nobody, who wiſhed him well, would, for the ſake of ſaving money, hinder any thing from being ſent, that his highneſs thought neceſſary for his defence. This cauſed an immediate compliance with every demand, though procured with the utmoſt difficulty; as the king's miniſters would have been otherwiſe liable to Mr. Coventry's reproaches of want of ability, or want of affection. But though he was diſappointed in this reſpect, he found ſomething to exerciſe his

upon her." In this deſign he was for ſome time checked by the fear, as ſir William ſays, "that England and Holland might agree to reſcue her, whenever they ſhould hear her cry out for help." It was therefore his immediate intereſt to ſee them both conſiderably weakened, before he declared himſelf on either ſide. Even when he pretended to aſſiſt the Dutch, he made them ſubſervient to his own purpoſes: he got ſhips of war built for him in Holland at a cheap rate: he ſupplied himſelf from thence with military ſtores and ammunition: in a word, he laid the foundation of that naval force, with which he hoped ſoon to give the law to maritime ſtates. Of his treachery to both nations in the courſe of the war, and his particular baſeneſs to England, towards the cloſe of it, we ſhall ſoon meet with remarkable inſtances.

intriguing

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intriguing ſpirit on board. There was a rivalſhip between him and the earl of Falmouth, who ſhould have moſt intereſt with the duke, who loved the earl beſt, but thought the other the wiſer man. Coventry had procured his great friend Penn to be made captain of the lord high admiral's own ſhip; and encouraged him in his haughty rudeneſs to all the courtiers, and even to the earl himſelf, who contemned Penn, as a fellow unworthy of the charge and truſt repoſed in him. Theſe factions, and the unpleaſantneſs of the ſea, gave many of the duke's family and of the volunteers a great diſreliſh for the war, which they had before been ſo eager to promote.

Victory at ſea.

After the fleet had been out for about a month, the Dutch remaining cloſe in their harbours, the duke returned to our own coaſt, where he reſolved to attend the motions of the enemy *. As ſoon as he received intelligence of their being at ſea, he ſet ſail to meet them; and on the firſt of June the fleets, which were nearly equal †, came within ſight of each other. Some ſkirmiſhes took place

* By this reſolution he gave the Holland and Zealand ſquadrons an opportunity of joining; and afterwards of intercepting the Engliſh Hamburgh fleet.

† The Engliſh fleet conſiſted of one hundred and fourteen ſail, beſides fire-ſhips and ketches; and the two Dutch ſquadrons were compoſed of one hundred and twenty-one ſail, but with a ſmaller number of fire-ſhips and ketches than the Engliſh.

on

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on the second, but the wind favouring neither party prevented a general engagement. On the third it served both their turns, and brought them as near each other as they could desire to be. The English were animated by the remembrance of their superiority in former wars; nor did the Dutch seem to advance with less confidence and intrepidity. Opdam, the Dutch commander in chief, was a brave man, but of no experience. He bore down with his squadron upon the duke, with a resolution to board him; but before he came near enough, either by some accident in his own ship, or from a grenado or other shot out of the duke's, his gun-room took fire, and in a moment the ship sunk, without a man being saved. Cortenaer, the vice-admiral, who succeeded him in command, pursued the same resolution, and would have boarded the duke, if Jeremy Smith, a captain of the duke's squadron, had not put himself between, and boarded the vice-admiral, whose ship, being now equally attacked by the duke, was taken, after most of the men were killed; and the vice-admiral himself was so wounded, that he only lived to be brought on board the duke's ship, and to complain of his not having been properly seconded. There was, in truth, but little unanimity among the officers of the Dutch fleet: the two surviving vice-admirals Evertzen, and Cornelius Tromp, son of the famous Martin Tromp, besides their being of opposite political factions, now dis-

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agreed on the right of ſucceſſion to the chief command. They continued the fight, however, though with evident diſadvantage, till night; and then hoiſting all their ſails, fled with the utmoſt precipitation. The duke, after giving orders to the maſter of his ſhip to bear after the enemy as cloſely as poſſible, that no ground might be loſt during the night, went to repoſe himſelf. The reſt of the fleet had no guide but the lanthorn of the admiral, and were not to outſail him of courſe, and behaved themſelves accordingly. But when the duke aroſe, and the day appeared, the Dutch were out of view; and before he could reach them, they were got into their ports, or under the ſhelter of their flats, where it was not adviſable to purſue them; ſo that the duke finding his own ſhip and many others much damaged, thought it neceſſary to retire to port, in order to refit.

The victory and triumph of the day were now conſpicuous. Eighteen ſhips of war belonging to the enemy, whereof half were of the beſt they had, were ſunk, burnt, or taken; and but one ſmall ſhip of the duke's whole fleet was miſſing. It is true the number of our killed and wounded men was great, and appeared much greater on account of there being many perſons of quality among them; whereas in the prodigious ſlaughter of the enemy, none fell of any particular name, or diſtinction, except the admiral and vice-admiral.

The

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The duke loſt a great many on board his own ſhip. The earl of Falmouth, and lord Maſkerry, eldeſt ſon to the earl of Clancarty, were killed ſo near his royal highneſs, that he was ſpattered with their blood. There fell likewiſe in the ſame ſhip Mr. Richard Boyle, younger ſon of the earl of Burlington, and many other gentlemen volunteers, beſides above two hundred men of inferior rank. In prince Rupert's ſhip, and in that of the earl of Sandwich, there were alſo many perſons of family ſlain. The earl of Marlborough, who had the command of one of the beſt ſhips, and the earl of Portland, who was a volunteer on board with him, fell ſide by ſide. Among many others, who ſhared the ſame fate, and whoſe memories ought to be preſerved, one deſerves particular notice, as his ſkill and bravery were equally conſpicuous. This was ſir John Lawſon. In the middle of the fight, he received a ſhot with a muſket-ball upon the knee; and finding that he could no longer ſtand and was in great torment, he ſent to the duke to deſire that another might be appointed to the command of the ſhip, which was done preſently. He was ſent on ſhore, and for ſome days there was hope of his recovery; but his wound ſhortly gangrened, and he died. He had riſen in the ſervice of the parliament, during the troubles, from the rank of a common ſailor to the command of their beſt ſhips. He had been in all the actions performed by Blake, ſome of which were very ſtupendous; and after-

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wards ſignalized himſelf in many other battles fought with the Dutch. He was commander in chief of the fleet when Richard Cromwell was thrown out; and when the conteſt grew between the Rump and the army, he brought the whole fleet into the river, and declared for the parliament. Upon the ſudden turn of affairs ſoon after, as he was ſuppoſed to be a zealous republican, and therefore not to be truſted, the ſupreme command was given to colonel Montague, in the rank of admiral; and the poſt of vice-admiral was ſtill continued to Lawſon. Thus his authority was leſſened, without removing him, which might have excited a mutiny, he had ſo great an intereſt in the ſeamen. After the king was proclaimed, he accompanied Montague in the fleet to Scheveling; and being received into favour by his majeſty and the duke, he ſerved them with great zeal and fidelity till his death, which was an almoſt irreparable loſs to the ſervice.

The trouble and grief of many families for the loſs of ſuch a number of gallant men clouded in ſome degree the public joy for ſo ſignal a victory. But no ſorrow was ſo great, none at leaſt ſo remarkable as the king's was for the earl of Falmouth. Neither the immenſe advantages gained, nor the ſafety of his own brother ſeemed to make any impreſſion towards mitigating his affliction for the death of this new favourite, in whom few other men

men had ever obſerved any virtue, or quality, which they did not wiſh their beſt friends without. Thoſe who reflected on the earl's inſatiable ambition, on his late rapid progreſs in the king's eſteem, and on the prodigious height of favour to which he might have attained in a little time more, were not at all troubled that he was taken out of the way; and even regarded his death as a great ingredient and conſiderable part of the victory. CHAP. II. 1665.

The duke, after he had given directions for the ſpeedy repairing of the fleet, and for the immediate ſending out of ſuch ſhips as could quickly be got ready to ride before the coaſts of Holland, made haſte to preſent himſelf to the king, and to the queen-mother, who had lately reſolved to go to France, but had ſtaid ſome days to wait the iſſue of the naval fight, and to ſee the duke. Her pretence for going was the bad ſtate of her health, and her dread of the plague; but upon her departure, which was ſoon after the duke's arrival, ſhe took ſo many things with her, that it was generally thought ſhe never meant to come back. Whatever her intentions at that time were, ſhe never did viſit England again, though ſhe lived for many years after.

Cauſe of not purſuing the ſucceſs.

Now the whiſper began in the duke's family of the reaſon why the victory, after ſo deciſive a ſuperiority, had not been purſued with ſuch vigour,

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as might have given an irrecoverable blow to the enemy. The maſter of the duke's ſhip purſued his orders very punctually, and kept for ſome time within a juſt diſtance of the main body of the Dutch fleet; but his royal highneſs was no ſooner aſleep, than Mr. Brounker of his bedchamber, who with wonderful confuſion had ſuſtained the terror of the day, reſolved to prevent the like on the day following. He firſt went to ſir William Penn, and urging the danger and preſumption of again expoſing the heir-apparent of the crown, after ſo providential an eſcape, adviſed him to order the maſter to ſlacken the ſails, that the Dutch might get what ground they could, to avoid a farther encounter. Penn anſwered that he durſt give no ſuch order order, except he had a mind to be hanged, for the duke had himſelf given poſitive charge to the contrary. Brounker then went to the maſter, and confidently told him, that it was the duke's pleaſure that he ſhould ſlacken ſail, without taking notice of it to any man. The maſter, not ſuſpecting that a ſervant ſo near his highneſs's perſon would dare to bring ſuch an order without due authority, did as he was commanded; by which means the remainder of the Dutch fleet eſcaped, that probably would otherwiſe have been all taken, as the contention between Evertzen and Tromp for the chief command had ſpread more confuſion amongſt them than even the deſtructive cannon of their purſuers. Nobody preſumed

preſumed to tell the duke of this, which made many ſuſpect that it was done with the privity of Mr. Coventry, or that Penn and the maſter would not have remained ſilent, when the duke expreſſed ſo much diſſatisfaction the next morning. Nor was this matter publicly known for ſome years after, when Brounker's ill courſe of life made him ſo odious, that among other cenſurable actions of his, the giving ſuch an order to the maſter of the duke's ſhip was taken notice of in parliament, and was found upon examination to be as is here related. Hereupon he was expelled the houſe of commons, whereof he was a member, as an infamous perſon, though his friend Coventry uſed many indirect arts to protect him, and afterwards engaged the king to countenance him. The only recommendation he had, to counterbalance a whole life of infamy was his playing very well at cheſs, which preferred him more than the moſt virtuous qualities could have done*.

With

* According to the above relation of Brounker's behaviour during the firſt day's fight, and the daring artifice of his directions to the maſter of the ſhip at night, the eſcape of the enemy appears to be chiefly owing to his cowardice; but this ſtigma is fixed upon the duke himſelf in biſhop Burnet's account of the ſame tranſaction. We ſhall give it in his own words, that the reader may be enabled to compare both narratives, and then form his opinion of their reſpective degrees of evidence, or probability. "After the fight," ſays the biſhop, "a council of war was called to concert the method of action, when they ſhould

 come

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With this victory a new expence, beſides repairs and additional equipments, appeared, that was not foreſeen, or brought into any computation, which was

come up with them. In that council, Penn, who commanded under the duke, happened to ſay, that they muſt prepare for hotter work in the next engagement: he knew well the courage of the Dutch was never ſo high as when they were deſperate. The earl of Montague, who was then a volunteer, and one of the duke's court, ſaid to me, it was very viſible that made an impreſſion: and all the duke's domeſtics ſaid, he had got honour enough: why ſhould he venture a ſecond time? The ducheſs had alſo given a ſtrict charge to all the duke's ſervants to do all they could to hinder him to engage too far. When matters were ſettled, they went to ſleep; and the duke ordered a call to be given him when they ſhould get up to the Dutch fleet. It is not known what paſſed between the duke and Brounker, who was of his bedchamber, and was then in waiting; but he came to Penn, as from the duke, and ſaid, the duke ordered the ſail to be ſlackened. Penn was ſtruck with the order, but did not go to argue the matter with the duke himſelf, as he ought to have done, but obeyed it. When the duke had ſlept, he, upon his waking, went out upon the quarter-deck, and ſeemed amazed to ſee the ſails ſlackened, and that thereby all hope of overtaking the Dutch was loſt. He queſtioned Penn upon it. Penn put it upon Brounker, who ſaid nothing. The duke denied he had given any ſuch order; but he neither puniſhed Brounker for carrying it, nor Penn for obeying it. He indeed put Brounker out of his ſervice; and it was ſaid, that he durſt do no more, becauſe Brounker was ſo much in the king's favour, and in the miſtreſs's. Penn was more in the duke's favour after that, than ever before, which he continued to his ſon after him, though a quaker; and it was thought, that all that favour was to oblige him to keep the ſecret. Lord Montague did believe, that the duke was ſtruck, ſeeing the earl of Falmouth, the king's favourite,

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was a proviſion for the ſick and wounded, and the charge of keeping the Dutch priſoners, who were above two thouſand, and increaſed daily. The duke was very impatient to have the fleet refitted for ſea, and ſeemed intent upon going again to command it. But the queen-mother had prevailed with the king at parting to promiſe her that the duke ſhould not expoſe himſelf any more in that expedition. This was as yet concealed as well from the duke, as from every body elſe, his majeſty believing that the confidence of his royal highneſs's going not only encouraged others, and occaſioned greater diſpatch, but contributed, as it certainly did, to the procuring of money for ſo many new and unexpected demands. This laſt object was alſo ſtrangely facilitated even by public calamity; for the increaſe of the plague made all people that had money, and could not venture to leave it in their houſes, where they durſt not ſtay themſelves, put it into the hands of the bankers, who ſupplied the king upon ſuch aſſignments as the late act of parliament and other branches of his majeſty's revenue would yet bear. Thus a temporary conve-

rite, and two other perſons of quality killed very near him; and that he had no mind to engage again; and that Penn was privately with him. If Brounker was ſo much in fault as he ſeemed to be, it was thought the duke, in the paſſion that this muſt have raiſed in him, would have proceeded to greater extremities, and not have acted with ſo much phlegm."

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nience seemed to flow from a fountain of extreme misery.

If at this time the French embassadors had pursued their office of mediation, it is very probable that it might have been with success. Besides the great loss, which the Dutch had received in the battle, and in being deprived of so many of their merchant ships, the factions were irreconcilable in the fleet. There were many officers, who had behaved themselves very basely and cowardly in the action, but whom it was dangerous to call to account. Evertzen and Tromp, who were the best seamen, would not submit to be commanded by each other. The people were ready to rise upon De Witt, whom they unjustly looked upon as the author of the war; and cried aloud for peace. The States themselves were torn by the rage of party; and as all the other provinces blamed that of Holland for involving them in the quarrel, it is likely that they would have forced that state to accept of any reasonable conditions that should be offered. The people of England in general were not pleased with the beginning of the war, nor had even this late victory reconciled them to it. The court grew also weary of it; and the king would have been willing to receive any good overtures for composing it. But the embassadors pressed no such matter. On the contrary, they congratulated the victory with

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with the ſame joy they found in the court, and ſeemed to think that any misfortune, that could befal the Dutch, would be but a juſt puniſhment for their pride and inſolence towards all their neighbour princes. The two nations had not yet worried themſelves enough, entirely to ſubmit to the arbitration of France, which it reſolved they ſhould do.

Command of the fleet given to the earl of Sandwich.

In leſs than a month the fleet was again prepared for ſea; and the king going to ſee it with the duke, informed him of the promiſe he had made to the queen their mother, and of his intention to give the joint command to prince Rupert and the earl of Sandwich. The duke complied, though with much ſeeming reluctance; but by the intrigues of Mr. Coventry, who did not think himſelf ſufficiently eſteemed and reſpected by prince Rupert, the ſole command was given to the earl of Sandwich. In a few days after the earl of Sandwich ſet ſail, with directions firſt to viſit the coaſts of Holland, and if he found that the Dutch fleet was not ready to come out, that he ſhould go northward to watch their Eaſt-India fleet, which had orders to come home that way, in hopes of eſcaping the vigilance of the Engliſh.

The court removed to Saliſbury.

Upon the king and duke's return to town, it being now the beginning of July, the plague increaſed ſo faſt that there died above two thouſand in a week; and it became highly adviſeable for his majeſty

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majeſty to withdraw from the danger. He firſt removed to Hampton; but as it was ſoon found that the ſickneſs had ſpread to ſome of the adjacent villages, the king reſolved to make choice of Saliſbury for his ſummer reſidence. Thither the duke and his family propoſed to accompany his majeſty; but he was diverted from this purpoſe by Mr. Coventry, who thought that his own conſequence would be loſt in the crowded union of the two courts. He ſuggeſted to the duke, that on account of the general diſcontents, then ſpread throughout the kingdom, it would be better for the king and his highneſs to ſeparate, that they might by their preſence in different parts reſtrain the ſpirit of turbulence and ſedition; and, as the king meant to ſpend the ſummer in the weſt, his highneſs could not make choice of a properer place to reſide at than York, in the neighbourhood of which an inſurrection was moſt to be dreaded, and where he could alſo receive by the way of Hull frequent intelligence from the fleet, which would probably be all the ſummer on the northern coaſt in expectation of the Dutch Eaſt-India ſhips. The advice was no ſooner given than embraced by the duke and his wife, who were well content to enjoy themſelves in their own family, apart from the court, where the prevalence of the ladies, and the queen's humour thereupon deſtroyed all peace and rational pleaſure. The duke then propoſed it to the king, who, upon hearing the reaſons aſſigned by

by Mr. Coventry, gave his consent; so that on the same day the duke and his family departed for York, and the king with the court set out for Salisbury.

Faint avowal of the French king's treaty with Holland.

A few days after his majesty's arrival there, he was waited upon by the French and the Spanish embassadors; and the former said, for the first time, "that their master was so far engaged by treaty with the Dutch, that he must, however unwillingly declare himself on their behalf, if the king would not accept of a just and an honourable peace." His majesty answered, "that if there was any such engagement, he had not been well dealt with; for that the French king had given his word to him, that he would not enter into any treaty with the Dutch, but *pari passu* with his majesty; and when his majesty had been informed that there was some treaty concluded with them, he was assured from France that it was only a treaty of commerce, in which there was nothing that could be to his majesty's prejudice." He added, "that he had been always ready to embrace peace, which had never yet been offered by the Dutch, nor did he know what conditions they expected." The embassadors artfully evaded any further discourse on the treaty, which their master, in direct violation of his word, had concluded with the Dutch; but they threw out hints, as if they were much offended with the insolent behaviour of the Dutch,

"who,"

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"who," they said, "were not in reality solicitous for peace, but only desired to engage their master in the war; nor did the embassadors press the matter any farther while the court remained at Salisbury.

De Witt's indefatigable exertions.

It was afterwards very well known that this faint avowal of the French king's engagement to assist the Dutch was at the pressing importunities of De Witt, who urged the performance of that treaty as the only means to silence the murmurs of the Orange party, and to make the States recover from the consternation and confusion, into which they had been thrown by the late defeat. The pensionary was now in a situation which required the full exertion of all his great talents and industry. The enemies he had to struggle with at home were much more formidable than those whom he was to provide against abroad. He saw how successfully the opposite faction worked upon the fears of the people; and that most of the provinces were led to regard him as the fomenter of the war. This prejudice he removed with wonderful address. He assured the States, "that he desired nothing more earnestly than a safe and honourable peace, and that France was very sincere in her endeavours to obtain it; but that the enemy were so insolent upon their late success, that they rejected all overtures, and seemed full of confidence that the factions and divisions among the States would hinder them from being

being able to ſet out another fleet. That," he ſaid, " ought therefore to be their firſt care, and if their fleet were ready to ſail, he doubted not but a peace would quickly follow; for that France was ſolemnly engaged, in caſe the king of England ſhould not conſent to what was juſt and reaſonable, to declare war againſt him, and to aſſiſt them with men, money, and all her naval power, which the duke of Beaufort was then preparing with the utmoſt diſpatch." He obſerved, however, " that it could not be expected that the king of France would ſend out his fleets, which were much inferior to the Engliſh, except he ſaw a Dutch fleet at ſea ready to join them." He concluded with reminding them of the great value and imminent danger of their Eaſt-India ſhips, which were ſoon expected home, and " which," he ſaid, " muſt inevitably fall into the hands of the Engliſh, if a proper fleet was not ſent out to protect them."

Theſe reaſons, of weight in themſelves, and enforced by De Witt with great ability, prevailed upon the States to purſue the plan which he recommended. They ſent very ſtrict and ſevere orders to their ſeveral admiralties, for the proceeding againſt all, without diſtinction of perſons, who had miſbehaved themſelves in the late battle; and to provide new ſhips, and every other neceſſary for the compleat equipment of a fleet by a certain day. This grew the more eaſy to them, by the return of

De

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De Ruyter with his fleet, which brought a preſent addition of good ſtrength. Beſides he was the beſt ſea-officer they had, and having exerciſed the higheſt command, no other could refuſe to obey him. That there might be no delay in carrying on theſe preparations, they made, according to their uſual cuſtom upon extraordinary occaſions, committees of the States to aſſiſt in the different admiralties; and to that purpoſe De Witt, and ſuch others as he thought fitteſt at this time to join with him, were appointed. They went firſt to the fleet to reform the diſorders there: they caſhiered many captains and officers: they put one or two to death: they ſet particular marks of diſgrace upon others: and though they did not think it ſafe or politic to proceed to the utmoſt rigour againſt all who deſerved it, yet they ſtruck a terror into the factious, and eſtabliſhed due ſubordination throughout the fleet. There ſoon appeared a general concurrence in promoting the public ſervice, and in repairing the damages ſuſtained by the late diſaſter.

Reception of Mr. Coventry in Sweden.

While the indefatigable De Witt was thus inciting his countrymen to the moſt vigorous efforts, and employing all the arts of negociation to keep the French king to his promiſe of aſſiſtance, the Engliſh embaſſadors ſent to the northern courts were not inattentive to the objects of their commiſſion. Mr.

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Mr. Coventry found a very frank and open reception in Sweden. That court did not diſſemble its reſentment of former injuries from the Dutch, nor its jealouſy of the ambitious deſigns of France; and was prevented from immediately declaring in favour of England only by two things, firſt, the dread that Denmark might, by a junction with the Dutch, endeavour to deprive the Swedes of all the conqueſts confirmed to them by the treaty of Copenhagen; and ſecondly, a wiſh to ſee the biſhop of Munſter fully engaged, which would give Sweden an opportunity of proſecuting its long cheriſhed deſign upon Bremen.

The firſt diſpatches that were received from ſir Gilbert Talbot, the embaſſador at Copenhagen, were far from affording any proſpect of eſſential aſſiſtance from that quarter. He ſaid, that he had been very politely received, with all imaginable profeſſions of affection for the Engliſh, and of deteſtation of the Dutch; but that the king of Denmark was weak, timid, and wavering, and having choſen his own barber, an illiterate man, for his chief miniſter, had thereby given ſuch offence to all the perſons of quality in the kingdom, that they conſpired to croſs all his purpoſes, ſo that what was concluded one day, was reverſed, or not purſued the next. Sir Gilbert was therefore of opinion that little good could be expected from a poor

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nation, an irresolute king, an ignorant minister, and a factious nobility.

Disreputable agreement with Denmark.

In consequence of these accounts, which were repeated, his majesty was on the point of recalling sir Gilbert, when he received an express stating, that the Dutch East-India fleet were just arrived in the port of Berghen, there to wait for a convoy from Holland; and that the king of Denmark had agreed to abandon them to the English fleet, on condition of being allowed to have the value of the whole; but that in order to remove any suspicion of treachery, he would protest against the act as a violence which he was incapable of resisting. Letters to ratify the bargain were immediately sent back to Copenhagen, and instructions forwarded to the earl of Sandwich, who lost no time in sailing towards Berghen, and detaching a squadron of fifteen or sixteen stout ships to make the proposed seizure. But after two days' delay in waiting for the arrival of the vice-roy of Norway with particular instructions, the patience of the English was exhausted, and they resolved to fall upon the Dutch without farther ceremony. In this attempt, however, they were disappointed; for the Dutch having in the interval drawn their ordnance on shore, and the inhabitants having thrown up a breast-work, behind which they were posted, the English were not only exposed to those fires, but to

that

that of the caſtle; and after having loſt a great number of private men, and ſeveral officers and volunteers of diſtinction, were forced to retire and join the reſt of the fleet.

Soon after the action the vice-roy arrived; and many meſſages paſſed and repaſſed between him and the admiral. Complaints were made of the precipitancy of the Engliſh ſquadron, and new propoſals were offered. The earl of Sandwich did not think fit to run any more hazards: he had reaſon to doubt the ſincerity of the Danes, and having alſo received intelligence that De Ruyter was out with the fleet, he was unwilling to be found intangled in rocks, and upon a coaſt, where the ſeas now towards the beginning of September began to run very high and boiſterous. He therefore reſolved to be maſter of more ſea-room, that he might fight the Dutch admiral, if he came; and if he did not, the earl might then meet thoſe Eaſt-India ſhips more ſecurely in their way to Holland, than by making another attempt in the harbour.

The Daniſh king's ſhameleſs perfidy.

This whole affair of Berghen was ſo dark and intricate that it could never be clearly underſtood. Mr. Clifford, who was preſent, being afterwards ſent to Copenhagen to expoſtulate with his Daniſh majeſty on the ſubject, was aſſured by that king, "that the diſappointment was entirely owing to bad weather, which had hindered the poſitive or-

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ders from arriving at the preciſe time :" he added, " that he was ſtill reſolved to detain the Dutch ſhips there, and only feared the conjunction of Sweden with Holland. Upon this Mr. Clifford went to Stockholm with the project of ſuch a treaty to be ratified there as would quiet all the Daniſh king's ſeeming apprehenſions. But in the mean time this faithleſs monarch made another bargain, or alliance with the oppoſite party, in which he ſtipulated to aſſiſt the Dutch with thirty men of war, for which he was to receive a ſubſidy of fifteen hundred thouſand florins, beſides the remiſſion of a large debt he owed the States, and the releaſe of the engagements they had upon the Sound. He then diſavowed his having made any offer or promiſe reſpecting the Dutch fleet at Berghen; complained that the Engliſh admiral had broken the law of nations in violating the peace of his ports, and endeavouring to fire his town, when he was hoſpitably received and treated there under the protection of his caſtle; and as if to aggravate his public perfidy by the baſeſt acts of private injuſtice, he iſſued orders for immediately ſeizing all Engliſh ſhips in Denmark, or Norway, and the perſons of all merchants and others who were ſubjects of England; and even many of thoſe merchants, to whom he owed great ſums of money, which they had lent him, were impriſoned, and all their effects confiſcated. Such a timid prince, whatever his depravity of ſentiment was, would never have proceeded

ceeded to ſuch daring outrages, if he had not been encouraged and urged on by France, who beſides warranting the performance of whatever was promiſed by the Dutch, and engaging to pay a part of the ſubſidy*, undertook alſo to protect the Dane againſt the juſtly dreaded reſentment of the Engliſh.

The parliament convened at Oxford.

The king ſtaid not altogether ſo long at Saliſbury, as he had intended, for beſides a little accidental indiſpoſition, which made him diſlike the air, ſome inferior ſervants and their wives came from London, and brought the plague with them; ſo that the court removed to Oxford before the end of September. The great likelihood that it would be dangerous for the parliament to meet at Weſtminſter at the time to which they were prorogued, and the neceſſity there was that they ſhould meet ſomewhere to grant another ſupply, had determined the king before he left Hampton, to iſſue a proclamation for requiring the parliament to meet at Oxford on the tenth of October; and proper directions were given to the ſpeaker of the commons and to other members of both houſes for the obſervance of the forms uſual on ſuch occaſions. The duke, having been ſent for by expreſs, came to Oxford the day after his majeſty; and the firſt

* France way to pay three hundred thouſand florins annually, while the war laſted.

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object of conſultation with reſpect to public buſineſs was what anſwer ſhould be made to the French embaſſadors, who now deſired frequent audiences, and poſitively declared "that their maſter was engaged by his treaty with the Dutch, that in caſe they were invaded or aſſaulted by any prince, he would aſſiſt them with men, money, and ſhips, which he had hitherto deferred, in hopes that his mediation might be accepted." But though they aſſumed a more peremptory tone upon theſe occaſions, they left room to ſuppoſe that it was rather to keep up appearances with the Dutch, whoſe embaſſador was likewiſe come to town, rather to treat concerning the priſoners, and to obſerve what the French embaſſadors did, than for the avowed purpoſe of making any ſpecific propoſals towards a peace. The French even inſinuated that the Dutch, ſince the refitting and enlargement of their fleet, expreſſed much confidence in their own ſuperiority, and looked upon the great plague in London, which ſtill raged with unabated fury, carrying off above ſix thouſand every week, as of ſuch inſupportable damage to the king, that he would not be able to fit out another fleet the year following; and that when they had been preſſed by the French king to make ſome offers, he could get no other anſwer from them than that they expected the iſland of Poleron ſhould be releaſed to them, and that the fort at Cabo Corſo in Guinea ſhould be thrown down and ſlighted, which the embaſſadors thought

thought insolent propoſals. They only wiſhed therefore that his majeſty would conſent to ſome reaſonable overture; and engaged that their maſter would then conduct himſelf in ſuch a manner as to give no cauſe to complain of his partiality to the Dutch.

The king, the duke, and thoſe perſons whom his majeſty uſed to conſult in his moſt ſecret affairs, were all willing to believe that France would not take a deciſive part againſt him, nor inſiſt upon his making the firſt overtures, which his majeſty not only regarded as a very humiliating condeſcenſion on his part, but an implied acknowledgment of his being the aggreſſor. It was therefore reſolved, that in reply to the declarations of the French embaſſadors, his majeſty ſhould complain of their maſter's proceedings in having entered into any engagement with the Dutch, expreſsly againſt his own word; that they had begun the war, and ought to make the firſt approach towards peace; that the conditions with reſpect to Cabo Corſo, and the iſland of Poleron, could not even be thought of without giving up the principal objects, for which the war had been undertaken; and that the pride and preſumption of the enemy on account of the calamity, with which the nation was at preſent afflict- deſerved no other notice than that his majeſty hoped God almighty had not ſent that heavy judgment of the plague upon him and his people, on the

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behalf of the Hollanders, and to expoſe him to their inſolence.

The parliament convened at Oxford in greater numbers than could reaſonably have been expected, the ſickneſs ſtill continuing to ſpread in ſeveral parts of the country, which made travelling very dangerous. Upon the tenth of October the king commanded both houſes to attend him in Chriſt-Church Hall, and told them, "that he was confident they did all believe, that if it had not been abſolutely neceſſary to conſult with them, he would not have called them together at that time, when the contagion had ſpread itſelf over ſo many parts of the kingdom; and that he thanked them for their compliance ſo far with his deſires." He reminded them of his having entered upon the war by their advice and encouragement; which made him more deſirous of giving them as frequently as poſſible information of the effects and conduct of it, that he might have the continuance of their chearful ſupply for carrying it on. He then mentioned the cauſes of its having been much more chargeable than was at firſt imagined. The extraordinary addition made to their fleets by the enemy rendered proportionable preparations on his part unavoidably requiſite; and God had hitherto bleſſed his efforts with ſucceſs. Their intrigues alſo with foreign powers obliged him to encourage princes, whom they had wronged, to recover their own

own by force; and he particularly inſtanced the biſhop of Munſter, whom he had aſſiſted with large ſums of ready money, and who, he believed, was at that time in the bowels of their country with a powerful army. In the proſecution of ſuch meaſures the former ſupply, however bountiful, and managed with great huſbandry, was already ſpent; and as no offers towards a peace had yet been made worthy of his acceptance, but, on the contrary the enemy grew inſolent from the continuance of the plague, he hoped for ſuch aſſiſtance as would enable him to carry on the war, and to defend himſelf againſt any new acceſſion of enemies.

The chancellor, at the ſame time, by the king's command, entered into a more circumſtantial narrative of the progreſs of the war, the victory obtained by the duke, the vaſt number of priſoners, and of ſick and wounded men, a charge that had not been computed, the unreaſonable conceſſions expected by the Dutch, and the menacing interpoſition of France. After thus endeavouring to inflame their zeal for the honour of the king and nation, he next gave an account of many treaſonable deſigns, which, he ſaid, would have been lately carried into execution, had it not been for the vigilance of government, and the general's unwearied induſtry.

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With reſpect to this latter part of the chancellor's ſpeech, though he was too liable to be impoſed upon in ſuch matters, yet it is certain, that at this time there were juſter grounds of alarm, and ſtronger motives for circumſpection than at any former period. The emiſſaries of the Dutch had been very active in fomenting the national diſcontents, and in urging the republicans and ſectaries to an inſurrection*. Some went abroad, and engaged in their ſervice, and it is likely that others who ſtaid at home, were not better affected to the preſent government. But the projects of a few deſperate individuals were not to be checked, nor the peace and ſecurity of the ſtate provided for by increaſing the rigours of perſecution. This was a fundamental error, which the chancellor did not

* Soon after the commencement of the rupture, the Dutch ſent an invitation to general Ludlow to repair to Holland, with the offer of being put at the head of a body of troops, which, with the concurrence of the party in England, might be ſufficient to reſtore the Commonwealth: but this truly great man refuſed to enter into any treaty of the kind, unleſs the Dutch would give ſatisfaction for the treachery they had been guilty of, in delivering up Okey, Corbet, and Barkſtead at the ſolicitation of the perfidious Downing. The Engliſh court, about the ſame time, ſuſpecting that this general would enter into meaſures with the Dutch, ſent four perſons into Switzerland to aſſaſſinate him; but the intent was defeated by his withdrawing from Vevey, the uſual place of his reſidence, and keeping himſelf for ſome time concealed.

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discover till it was too late; and in which, as I have repeatedly observed, his fears and prejudices made him the constant dupe of the duke of York's artful insinuations.

Vote of fresh supplies.

The king could not expect or wish a fuller concurrence from a parliament than he now found. With very little hesitation they voted the sum of twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds to be raised by monthly assessments for his majesty's present supply; and upon a hint given them, that a testimony of their gratitude for the victory obtained by the duke of York at the imminent hazard of his life, would please the king very much, they added to their first vote of supply another month's assessment, about fifty thousand pounds, which they desired his majesty to confer as a free-gift upon his royal highness. After this a bill was carried through both houses, though not without some opposition in the lords, for prohibiting all non-conforming preachers, or teachers, under a penalty of forty pounds for each offence, from dwelling or coming, unless upon the road, within five miles of any city, town corporate, or borough, or any place, where they had before officiated *. It is

Five-mile Act.

* After the Act of Uniformity, and the Act against Conventicles, this Five-mile Act, as it was called, seemed to be the last step in the climax of intolerance; for to deprive men of the means of subsistence implies more deliberate cruelty, though it does

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is remarkable that the chancellor's ſtrongeſt oppo-nents in the debate on this bill were the earl of Southampton and lord Aſhley, the one his ſincereſt friend, and the other his determined enemy; the one averſe to perſecution from the ſtrongeſt motives

does not excite ſo much horror as fire and faggots. By this act, "all perſons in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, who had not declared their aſſent and conſent to the Book of Common Prayer, according to the Act of Uniformity, and did not take and ſubſcribe the oath of non-reſiſtance therein contained; together with all ſuch as ſhould take upon them to preach in any conventicle, or meeting for exerciſe of religion contrary to law, were not (unleſs only in paſſing the road) to come, or be within five miles of any city, town corporate, or borough that ſends burgeſſes to parliament; nor within five miles of any place where they had officiated, or taken upon them to preach; upon the pain of forfeiting forty pounds for ſuch offence: Nor was any perſon ſo reſtrained, or who ſhould not take the ſaid oath, and frequent divine ſervice, to teach any ſchool, or take any boarders or tablers that were taught by any other, on pain likewiſe of forfeiting forty pounds: And two juſtices, upon oath made of any offence againſt the act, were to commit the offender for ſix months, without bail or mainpriſe." Is it not aſtoniſhing that ſo infamous an act, framed and paſſed by about one hundred of Charles the ſecond's menial ſervants, for of ſuch the houſe of commons at Oxford was almoſt wholly compoſed, ſhould be ſtill ſuffered to diſgrace our ſtatute-book! A party of thoſe ignorant and corrupt creatures had even formed the project of impoſing upon the whole nation the neceſſity of perjuring themſelves, by making every ſubject ſwear, "that it was not lawful, *upon any pretence whatſoever*, to take arms againſt the king, or againſt thoſe that were commiſſioned by him;" and they were ſo near carrying this point, that upon the queſtion, the bill they had brought in for the purpoſe was only rejected by three voices.

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of conſcience as well as policy, and the other very indifferent to all religious conſiderations, but deeply reſenting the rejection of his own ſcheme to raiſe money by tolerating papiſts.

As the courts of law had likewiſe adjourned the term to Oxford, which brought thither a great concourſe of perſons from all places, even from London itſelf, whence the communication of the plague was ſo much to be dreaded, the parliament confined themſelves to the diſpatch of neceſſary buſineſs, that they might be diſmiſſed, as ſoon as poſſible, to their reſpective habitations. But ſome time had been unavoidably loſt upon the bill of ſupply, not from any reluctance to grant ſo large a ſum, which, as I ſaid before, was voted with the utmoſt readineſs, but from the inſertion of a new clauſe to alter the mode of iſſuing money from the exchequer, which gave riſe to much debate, and proved in its conſequences ſo miſchievous, that it will not be unfit to ſet down a particular account of it.

Innovations in the Exchequer.

Lord Arlington and ſir William Coventry, the latter of whom had been lately knighted, and admitted a member of the privy council and of the ſelect committee, were ſtill unſatisfied with the extraordinary degree of influence and elevation they had attained, unleſs they could make a total change in the courſe and method of the king's councils, which

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which was not to be done without the removal of the chancellor and treaſurer. Their malice was moſt againſt the chancellor; but they did not as yet think it ſafe to throw off the diſguiſe of a pretended eſteem for him. They began therefore with the treaſurer, often inſinuating to the king how ill all the buſineſs of the exchequer was managed, by reaſon of the treaſurer's continual infirmities, which obliged him to leave the whole to the care of his ſecretary. As the king was too eaſy in making aſſignments upon his revenue, which the treaſurer often found himſelf obliged to oppoſe, they ſaid that it was a high arrogance and preſumption in any ſubject to ſtop the king's ſignature; and that the want of money, which the treaſurer alledged to juſtify ſuch refuſals, proceeded from his own unſkilfulneſs and inactivity. Lord Aſhley had for ſome time engaged with them in the ſame intrigue, in the hope of getting the treaſurer's place; but when he found that they intended nothing of advantage to him, he ceaſed to puſh that matter, though in all other particulars he ſided with them.

The two aſſociates, however, ſoon found another perſon much more uſeful to them in promoting their immediate deſigns againſt the treaſurer. This was ſir George Downing, who having for ſome years held the office of a teller of the exchequer, and being of a reſtleſs brain, learned enough of the nature of the revenue, and of the courſe of the receipts

ceipts, to make others, who underſtood leſs of it, imagine that he knew the bottom of it, and that the expedients, which ſhould be propoſed by him towards a reformation, would be readily adopted. He was much diſſatisfied with the treaſurer's giving aſſignments upon the receipts of the revenue to the bankers, who ſupplied government with money; by which means, though the tellers of the exchequer received their juſt fees, they had not what they would have taken, if the ſums ſo aſſigned for the repayment of the bankers had paſſed through their hands. Motives therefore of immediate intereſt in his own office, as well as the deſire of increaſing his conſequence with ſuch men as ſir William Coventry and lord Arlington, made him very ready to inſtruct them in all the pretended miſcarriages and overſights of the treaſury, and to propoſe ſome plauſible innovations. "The root of all evil," he ſaid, "was the unlimited power of the lord treaſurer, without whoſe warrant no money could be iſſued even at the king's deſire, which ſeemed a very great incongruity." He added, "that the bankers had ſecured the treaſurer's favour, and thereby engroſſed all the money of the ſtate; but that by inſerting a clauſe into the bill of ſupply, for confining the payments at the exchequer to thoſe perſons only, and for thoſe purpoſes to which his majeſty himſelf ſhould aſſign them, all inconveniences would be prevented, the inordinate power of the treaſurer diminiſhed, the credit

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credit of the exchequer raiſed, and the king relieved from the humiliating formalities of warrants and privy ſeals."

Sir William Coventry and lord Arlington were highly delighted with theſe remarks, ſo favourable to their wiſhes, and ſo likely to be approved by the king. They took Downing to his majeſty, and made him enlarge on the many miſchiefs that would be remedied, and the vaſt convenience and advantage that would accrue to his majeſty's ſervice by the new method that he had deviſed. He even made the king believe, that this project of appropriating all the branches of the revenue to particular purpoſes, without the treaſurer's controul, would quickly raiſe the reputation of his his majeſty's exchequer ſo high, that all men would depoſit their money there, and it would become the beſt and greateſt bank in Europe. The king was ſo intoxicated with theſe notions that no arguments on the other ſide of the queſtion were even thought of. He never conferred with any body elſe on the ſubject; but deſired that when the bill for ſupply ſhould be read a ſecond time and committed, Downing ſhould offer his proviſo; and becauſe it was foreſeen that it might be oppoſed even by many of the court-party, Downing and the other two were authorized privately to aſſure ſuch perſons, that it was offered with the king's approbation. His majeſty reſolved alſo to new model the

whole

whole government of his treaſury, and not to have a ſuperior officer much longer; but this laſt intention he communicated to thoſe only who deviſed the project.

In order to give the intended clauſe the moſt plauſible and popular ſhape, they contrived it ſo artfully, as if all the money, to be raiſed by the bill for ſupply was to be applied to thoſe ends only for which it was granted, and to no other purpoſe whatſoever, by what authority ſoever. When this ſtrange proviſo was moved for by Downing, upon the ſecond reading of the bill, the ſolicitor-general and many others were ſo ſtartled at the ſeeming reſtriction it impoſed even upon the king himſelf, that they would never have ſuffered it to be committed, if they had not been aſſured by Mr. Coventry, that it was brought in by the king's own direction, and for purpoſes well underſtood by his majeſty. In the afternoon of the ſame day the king ſent for the ſolicitor, and forbad him any more to oppoſe that proviſo. He alſo ſpoke to ſome other members of the houſe upon the ſubject; and all oppoſition being now removed, it paſſed the commons, with the correction only of a few abſurdities, not foreſeen by the framers of it.

Money-bills ſeldom ſtay long with the lords. The houſe of commons being the immediate repreſentative of the people, it is preſumed, that they

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beſt know what the people can bear, or are willing to ſubmit to. Whatever therefore the right or privilege of the lords may be, it would be very ungracious in them to put any ſtop to the paſſage of ſuch bills; ſo that when they are once adjuſted by the commons, they paſs through the houſe of peers with the reading twice and formal commitments, in which any alterations are ſo rarely made, that the engroſſment ſent up by the commons is uſually the bill itſelf that is preſented to the king for his aſſent. As ſoon, therefore, as the bill of ſupply was ſent to the lords, all other acts, which were thought neceſſary for the preſent ſeſſion, having paſſed both houſes while this was preparing, many members of the commons left the town, conceiving that nothing more remained for them to do, and that the king, on paſſing that act with the others which were ready, would prorogue the parliament out of fear of the ſickneſs. But the novelty of Downing's clauſe ſo ſurpriſed the lords, that they thought it worthy of a very ſerious conſideration.

It happened to be in an ill conjuncture, when the terrible cold weather kept the lord treaſurer from going out of his chamber for fear of the gout, of which the chancellor had, at the ſame time, ſo ſevere an attack as to be obliged to remain in his bed; and neither of them had received information of this affair. But many of the lords now ſpoke to them upon the ſubject; and ſome went

went to the king to let him know the prejudice that the new proviſo would certainly bring upon him. Even lord Aſhley, who had been privy to the beginning of the ſcheme, finding himſelf left out in the moſt ſecret part of it, paſſionately inveighed againſt it both in public and private, and finding in the fertility of his wit and invention more objections to it than any body elſe had made, he ſo alarmed the king with remarks on its deſtructive conſequences, that his majeſty conſented to have the matter debated in his preſence. He thereupon ordered a meeting at the chancellor's chamber, where his majeſty and his brother were preſent, as alſo the chancellor in his bed, the lord treaſurer, lords Aſhley and Arlington, ſir William Coventry, the attorney and ſolicitor-general and ſir George Downing, who the king ſtill believed would be able to anſwer all objections.

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The firſt argument urged againſt the clauſe was its novelty, which might lead to unforeſeen evils, beſides immediately transferring the authority of the treaſurer, and of the chancellor of the exchequer to the tellers, who were ſubordinate officers, and confining the various ſupplies to ſuch particular purpoſes, that his majeſty would never be maſter of his own money, nor the miniſters of his revenue ever able to make aſſignments for defraying any caſual expences of what nature ſoever. The king had ſo little reverence for old forms and

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orders, that the objection of novelty rather advanced than obſtructed any propoſal. He was a great lover of new inventions, and thought them the effects of wit and ſpirit, and fit to controul the ſuperſtitious obſervance of the dictates of our anceſtors. That argument therefore made little impreſſion; and as to the want of power in the diſpoſal of his own money, he ſaid, it would be amply recompenſed by the eſtabliſhment of his bank, all diſcourſe againſt which was ſuppoſed to proceed from pure ignorance. One of the lords having aſſerted that the imagination of a bank was a mere chimera, ſir George was let looſe to inſtruct them how eaſy it was to be eſtabliſhed. He talked in an imperious ſtile of the banks of Amſterdam, Genoa, and Venice; ſaid they had been ſettled by the induſtry of very few perſons, when the greateſt men thought ſuch attempts impracticable; and aſſerted, that his majeſty's exchequer would by means of the propoſed reform quickly ſurpaſs any of thoſe banks in credit, and make England the ſeat of all the trade in Chriſtendom. Then aſſuming all he ſaid to be demonſtration, he wrapped himſelf up, according to his cuſtom, in a miſt of words, that nobody could ſee light in, but they, who by often hearing the ſame chat thought they underſtood it. He never ſeemed to conſider that the ſecurity for the money depoſited in any of the banks he mentioned was the republic itſelf, which muſt expire before that ſecurity could fail; but that no ſuch confidence

confidence could be placed in a king's exchequer, where the ſole word of the monarch might cancel every formal proviſion. CHAP. II. 1665.

The next objection was againſt the injuſtice of the clauſe, and the ill conſequences of that injuſtice. Money had been borrowed from the bankers upon the credit of this bill, as ſoon as the firſt vote had paſſed in the houſe of commons for ſo conſiderable a ſupply; and the treaſurer had alſo made aſſignments upon ſeveral branches of the revenue, which had been reſerved for the army and the immediate expences of the king and queen's houſehold, upon preſumption that enough would come in from this new act of parliament to replace the ſums, which had been thus anticipated. But by the new proviſo eſpecial care was taken, that none of the money to be raiſed ſhould be applied to the payment of any debt contracted before the royal aſſent was given to the bill; ſo that both the money lent by the bankers upon the promiſe made to them muſt be unpaid and unſecured; and the ſums alſo, which had been anticipated upon particular branches of the revenue, and diverted from their original uſe, not being replaced, would leave the army and houſehold unprovided for. Beſides the bankers had the king's word, and the engagement of the miniſters of the revenue, that all new bills of ſupply ſhould ſtill make good what former ſecurities were not ſufficient to do; for by the

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heavy viſitation of the plague, the aſſignments, which had been made on the exciſe and chimney-money, proved very deficient; and in conſequence of the decay of trade occaſioned by the war and ſickneſs, the aſſignments on the cuſtoms brought in ſo little money, that the debt to the bankers remained almoſt as high as it was a year before, notwithſtanding the liberal grant of the two millions and a half. When it ſhould be known therefore, that the new ſupply was exempt from the payment of any of thoſe and the like debts, it would be a great heart-breaking to the bankers, who had not only lent the king all their own property, but the property of many thouſands of other men, who would now be deprived of all proſpect, or likelihood of being ever repaid. It was farther urged, that beſides the diſhonour and injuſtice of ſuch a breach of faith, nothing could be more evident than that, let the future neceſſities of the crown be ever ſo great, there could be no hope of borrowing money, ſince it would be no longer in the power of the king himſelf to make any aſſignment upon new impoſitions.

The king ſeemed much troubled at any loſs the bankers might ſuſtain; but it was very plain that the contrivers of the project did not care what ruin befel thoſe public creditors, and that his majeſty himſelf was in this inſtance too regardleſs of his own credit and character. Downing broke out into

into many indecent and bitter invectives againſt the bankers: he called them cheats, bloodſuckers, extortioners; and aſſerted that they were the cauſes of all the king's neceſſities, and of the want of money throughout the kingdom. He ſlighted what was paſt as ſufficiently provided for; and undertook that for the future the king ſhould never more want ſuch dearly purchaſed aſſiſtance; for that this act, he ſaid, would be no ſooner paſt, than money, upon the credit of it, would be poured into the exchequer faſter than it could be told. His majeſty could not pretend that he was perfectly ſatisfied with ſuch vague anſwers to ſo weighty an objection: he affected to wiſh that the matter had been better conſulted, or that ſome amendments could be made in the bill, without caſting out the proviſo, the foundation and end of which ſtill pleaſed him for thoſe reaſons, which he would not communicate, and for which, perhaps, more than any other, it ought to have been rejected. It even appeared that there was no real deſire for any material alterations. It was ſuggeſted that they might give occaſion to more debate; and that, as ſeveral of the beſt affected members of the houſe of commons were gone out of town, when the bill ſo altered ſhould be ſent down thither again, it might be longer detained there than would be convenient for the public, or agreeable to the general impatience for a prorogation. Upon the whole, his majeſty ſaid, that it was better not to run the hazard

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of delay, but to make such amendments only as would be consented to in both houses as soon as they were read. The bill accordingly met with no farther interruption; and the king having given his assent to it, and to the other acts that had been some days in readiness *, the parliament was prorogued to April following.

In the course of the debate at the private consultation, the chancellor was prompted by Downing's insolence, and perhaps in some degree by the pain which he then suffered from the gout, to break out into some unusual asperities of language: he sharply reprehended Downing for his arrogance in undertaking to set such a design on foot, that concerned the whole fabric of the exchequer, in which he filled an inferior place, without first communicating it to his superior officers, and receiving their advice; and told him, "that it was impossible for the king to be well served, whilst fellows of his condition were admitted to speak as much as they had a mind

* Besides those above-mentioned, and the continuation of the former act for restraining the liberty of the press, the parliament had also prepared a bill for attainting such of his majesty's subjects as were engaged in the Dutch service, if they did not appear upon a day prefixed, after notice by the king's proclamation; but even in this they shewed a greater desire to oblige the king, than to promote the public service; for they left entirely to his majesty the nomination of any persons who might be obnoxious to him, and who, indeed, were particularly aimed at in this bill of attainder.

to;

to; and that in the beſt times ſuch preſumption would have been puniſhed with impriſonment by the lords of the council."

There was no notice taken at the time, nor any reply made to the chancellor's unguarded vehemence. But thoſe who felt that the ſting was aimed at them as well as at the teller of the exchequer, found quickly opportunity to incenſe the king, and to make him believe, that the chancellor's behaviour was a greater affront to his majeſty, than to Downing; that a gentleman ſhould undergo ſuch reproach in the king's own preſence, for no other reaſon but having with all humility preſented to his majeſty an information, which he was led into by the very nature of his office; and having afterwards followed the directions given by the king himſelf; and that, if this were overlooked, it muſt terrify all men from giving his majeſty any light in his own affairs, ſo that he would know nothing of his neareſt concerns but what his chief miniſters ſhould think fit to impart to him. Feeling themſelves upon advantageous ground, they made the moſt of it; and whatever their wit, ſharpened by malice, could ſuggeſt, they inforced with warmth, which now appeared the effects of zeal for the king's dignity. All this could not fail of making impreſſion; and though the chancellor, ſome time after, on the king's expreſſing a great reſentment of his behaviour at the conference, made the beſt apology

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apology he could, yet he had reaſon to think that the inſinuations of his enemies were not wholly forgotten.

The purpoſe of making the alteration in the government of the treaſury was purſued very induſtriouſly. The framers of the proviſo in the money bill had flattered themſelves, that the indignity of the affront thereby put upon the treaſurer would have prompted him to give up his ſtaff; and it is probable that he would have done ſo, if he had not been diſſuaded by his friends from gratifying thoſe who wiſhed him out of the way. That plot therefore not ſucceeding, they perſuaded the king to try another expedient; and as they heard that it was the chancellor alone who had prevented the treaſurer from reſigning, they ſaid, that if his majeſty would clearly tell the chancellor how agreeable it would be to him to have the ſtaff given up, there was no doubt but that ſuch an intimation would have the deſired effect. The king purſued their inſtructions with great delicacy and artifice; but the chancellor pleaded ſo ſtrongly in favour of his old friend, and engaged the duke of York to become ſo warm an advocate for his continuance, that the king gave up the point, and the contrivers of the ſcheme did not chuſe to preſs him any farther at preſent. They took care, however, to place his majeſty's irreſoluteneſs (which they ſaid ſtill enabled the chancellor to impoſe upon him) in ſuch a point

point of view, that the king did not think the better of the chancellor or the treaſurer, for his receding at that time from proſecuting what he had ſo poſitively reſolved to have done; and he promiſed his favourite adviſers to be firmer to his next determination.

Diſgrace incurred by the earl of Sandwich.

Thoſe private intrigues and contentions unhappily prevailed too much in all his majeſty's councils, and at a time when the ſtate of public affairs required the utmoſt unanimity and vigour. The return of the earl of Sandwich from the unſucceſsful expedition to Berghen furniſhed new matter for a different train of cabals. He had been obliged, for the reaſons before explained, to remove out of thoſe northern ſeas to the coaſts of Holland, where there were harbours enough for his whole fleet to ride ſafe. In the interval receiving intelligence that De Ruyter was paſſed by for Norway, to convoy home the rich merchant ſhips, the earl took all the care he could to put himſelf in the way of their return; but the darkneſs and length of the nights ſo favoured them, that they eſcaped his vigilance, with the loſs, however, of a few of their ſtragglers, and two of their moſt valuable Eaſt-Indiamen, which were ſurprized and boarded at break of day, when they thought themſelves in the middle of their own fleet.

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This booty came very opportunely to ſupply the preſent neceſſities of the navy; but it being much leſs than was expected, the news no ſooner arrived at Oxford, but intelligence came with it of many overſights which had been committed, and opportunities loſt; otherwiſe it had been eaſy to have taken the whole fleet. Sir William Coventry, who had contributed to the preferment of the earl of Sandwich, only that he might croſs prince Rupert, received much intelligence from ſeveral officers in the fleet, which he ſcattered abroad to the earl's prejudice, and was willing that it ſhould be believed, that he had been too wary in avoiding danger. But theſe reports, not being countenanced by either the king, or duke, ſerved only to ſhew the eagerneſs of the earl's enemies to diſcredit and injure him; and they could not wiſh for a more favourable opportunity of executing their purpoſe than his own indiſcretion or avarice very ſoon furniſhed them with.

It was a conſtant and a known rule in the admiralty, that when a ſhip is taken from the enemy, bulk is not to be broken till it be brought into the port, and adjudged lawful prize. It ſeems that when the earl's fleet returned to the harbour, the flag-officers applied to him for ſome reward out of the Eaſt-India ſhips, for the fatigue and danger they had undergone. He wrote a letter to the vice-chamberlain, who was alſo treaſurer of the navy,

navy, to inform the king of their requeſt, which he himſelf thought very reaſonable. The vice-chamberlain having ſhewn the letter to the king, returned his majeſty's approbation; but before the anſwer reached the earl, he had executed the deſign, and diſtributed as much of the goods to each of the flag-officers as were eſtimated at one thouſand pounds, and took to the value of two thouſand pounds to himſelf. This ſuddenly made ſuch a noiſe and outcry as if all the ſhips had been plundered by the ſeamen; and they again cried out as much that no care was taken of them, but all given to the flag-officers.

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The general, who had nothing like kindneſs for the earl of Sandwich, and thought his ſervices very much over-rated by the king at the reſtoration, received notice of this late tranſaction, before it reached Oxford. Under the ſhew of great care for every part of the public ſervice, but in truth from private animoſity, he ſent orders to all the port-towns to ſeize upon goods, which were brought in ſhallops from the fleet; and, at the ſame time, wrote to Oxford, aggravating all the ill conſequences of the earl's proceeding, which, he ſaid, would ſpoil the ſale of what remained of thoſe ſhips, ſince the Eaſt-India company, who probably would have been the beſt chapmen, would not now be forward to buy, ſince ſo much was already diſpoſed of to other hands, as would ſpoil the market.

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The king was juſtly diſpleaſed with the earl's precipitancy. Why had his majeſty's approbation been deſired, when the earl reſolved to do the thing, before he could receive an anſwer? The king was now glad, that the earl had not waited for the anſwer, becauſe he would then have been more excuſable. But the duke, who had been conſtantly kind to the earl, was offended in the higheſt degree, and thought himſelf injured and affronted beyond any precedent. His advice, as the ſuperior officer, ought to have been aſked; and for the earl to aſſume the rewarding of officers, by his own authority, was to defraud and rob him of his proper right and juriſdiction.

Sir William Coventry had now full ſea-room to give vent to all his paſſions, and to incenſe the duke, who wanted no farther incitement. Hints were thrown out, that if the earl's conduct proceeded from covetouſneſs, it was not likely that it could be ſatisfied with ſo little, and therefore it might be fairly preſumed, that, though the officers perhaps received no more than the value of one thouſand pounds each, yet the earl himſelf would not be contented with ſo little as two thouſand, but would have taken much more, which ought to be inquired into with the greateſt ſtrictneſs. Every thing which had been ſaid before of his having neglected many occaſions of advantage over the enemy, and of not purſuing them far enough,

were

were now renewed; and there were great underhand endeavours that the houſe of commons might be inflamed with this late miſdemeanor, and preſent it to the houſe of lords, as fit to be examined and brought to judgment before that tribunal. They, who with all the malice imaginable endeavoured to kindle this fire, perſuaded the king and the duke, that by their ſole activity and intereſt it was prevented for that time, becauſe the ſeſſion was too ſhort, and all neceſſary evidence could not be ſoon produced at Oxford; but that as ſoon as the plague ſhould ceaſe to ſuch a degree in London, that the parliament might aſſemble there, it would be impoſſible to reſtrain the houſe of commons from purſuing that inquiry.

The earl, who was not without information of the efforts and deſigns of his enemies at Oxford, repaired thither, as ſoon as his abſence from the fleet could be diſpenſed with; and gave ſo clear and full an account of his conduct while at ſea, that both the king and duke thought him undeſerving of any imputation of negligence or inadvertency; but they expreſſed at the ſame time their ſtrong diſapprobation of his breaking bulk, and of all the circumſtances that attended it. He made an ingenuous acknowledgment of his fault; expreſſed his hearty ſorrow for it; and humbly begged pardon. As he was permitted to return to the fleet, it is probable that the matter might have been

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been overlooked, if he had not ſuch powerful enemies. Sir William Coventry perſuaded the duke, and lord Arlington made the king believe, that the houſe of commons was determined to fall ſeverely upon the earl at the next meeting, which, if he were at that time in the command of the fleet, would be a very great diſhonour to the king; and that there was no way to preſerve him but by diſmiſſing him from that charge, ſince it would be interpreted as inflicted on him by the king for his crime, and ſo might ſtop any farther proſecution for the ſame offence. The general alſo was not remiſs in promoting as far as poſſible by all his intereſt the earl's diſgrace. The warrants he had iſſued for ſeizing all goods that were brought from the fleet occaſioned a direct ſtruggle for authority between him and the earl, as the latter wanted to have an officer of the cuſtoms at Lynn puniſhed for attempting to ſtop a ſhallop full of his goods, with circumſtances of peculiar inſult; while the former juſtified the officer for obeying and executing his warrant. In ſhort the combination againſt the earl was ſo irreſiſtible, that the king reſolved to remove him from the command of the fleet; but endeavoured to leſſen the uneaſineſs he might feel on that account by giving him another honourable appointment as his majeſty's embaſſador extraordinary to the court of Spain. Sir Richard Fanſhaw was to be recalled from that court for having ſigned a treaty which his majeſty did not approve of;

of; and as ſoon as the matter was ſettled with reſpect to the earl, the king declared his reſolution in council to ſend him in quality of embaſſador extraordinary to Madrid, as well to correct and amend the miſtakes and errors in the late treaty, as to mediate a peace between Spain and Portugal, which upon the death of the king of Spain would be in ſome reſpects more practicable. Sir Robert Southwell, one of the clerks of the council, was alſo ſent envoy into Portugal, that the earl might the better know the inclinations of that court; and the inſtructions neceſſary to both thoſe ends were to be prepared with all poſſible diſpatch. After the deſignation of the earl of Sandwich was publiſhed, prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle were appointed joint commanders in chief of the fleet for the next expedition.

Menaces and departure of the French embaſſadors.

The late damage ſuſtained by the Dutch, particularly in the loſs of their two Eaſt-India ſhips, inflamed them exceedingly. De Witt made grievous complaints to France of its breach of faith in ſo long delaying the aſſiſtance ſtipulated by treaty, and thereby giving the enemy every advantage at the moſt critical juncture. He alſo very artfully ſuggeſted, that his own credit with the States depended upon the immediate declaration of France in their favour, without which the Orange faction would ſoon give the law, and the king of England become in reality maſter in Holland. De Witt's

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remonſtrances were not without effect. The French embaſſadors received inſtructions once more to make a lively inſtance to his majeſty, that he would declare what he meant to inſiſt upon in order to a peace, which if he refuſed to do, they ſhould take their leaves and return home immediately. In this audience they ſpoke with unuſual earneſtneſs: they complained of the intolerable injuries done to the ſubjects of France by the king's ſhips, and privateers acting under his authority, which, without any diſtinction, ſeized upon all that came in their way; and that, when application was made to the admiralty, or to the lords commiſſioners, the ſufferers could procure no juſtice, and were obliged to ſuch an attendance and expence, that what they ſued for did not prove of value to ſatisfy the charge; and if after a long ſolicitation, they did at laſt procure a ſentence for the re-delivery of what had been taken from them, when they hoped to enjoy the benefit of this juſt ſentence by the execution, they found their goods embezzled in the port, or plundered by the ſeamen, ſo that the owners had rarely a third part of their property reſtored to them. By ſuch violence and unjuſt proceeding, the embaſſadors ſaid, the French merchants had loſt near five hundred thouſand piſtoles, which their maſter reſented, and looked upon as a great indignity to himſelf, but which he had hitherto borne, in hope that the grievance would have been removed by putting an end to the war. They urged

urged it as an argument of their master's friendship for the king, that notwithstanding a defensive treaty so long since entered into with the Dutch, by which he was obliged to assist them when attacked, he had as yet avoided taking an active part in their favour; but that after their defeat in the summer, and another blow lately sustained, it was not possible for him to defer it any longer, They concluded with very earnest persuasions that his majesty would consent to such a peace as should appear reasonable to their master, who could not but be very just to his majesty, and wished it might be considered, how impossible it was for England, besides the dreadful ravages of the plague, to sustain the arms of France in conjunction with those of Holland, and when possibly some other prince might also join them.

The charge of the depredations made upon the French merchants was the only article in this representation, which had the least truth in it; and even in that respect the conduct of the English admitted of some excuse; for at the beginning of the war it was a common practice with the French to undertake to convey in their own ships into Holland wine and other goods bought and paid for in France by the Dutch; and when that was once discovered, it is no wonder that our seamen should often seize on vessels, which were not liable to the same reproach. As to the treaty, which the em-

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baſſadors called a defenſive one, but was in truth offenſive alſo, the French king's perfidy was very manifeſt, and correſponded exactly with the character given of his nation fourteen hundred years ſince, "*Galli fidenti fidem fregerunt.*" His ſecret endeavours to unite Denmark again to the Dutch, and to diſſuade the biſhop of Munſter from proſecuting his enterprize againſt the States (in both which he at length ſucceeded) were well known; as alſo that he had contributed to the compoſing of the late diſtractions in Holland, and to the ſupport of the power and credit of De Witt, who was the ſoul of the war; and that he had ſent him one hundred thouſand piſtoles, which greatly facilitated the equipment of the laſt fleet under De Ruyter. The unuſual efforts lately made by the French to eſtabliſh a foreign trade excited in like manner much jealouſy; and beſides the indignity of conſenting to make thoſe arbitrators, who had already ſhewn themſelves to be parties in the diſpute, it was juſtly to be feared, that where the deciſion was left to them, they would imitate the infamous Roman precedent of adjudging that to themſelves, which was in difference between their neighbours. Theſe conſiderations determined the king to diſmiſs the embaſſadors with juſt complaints of their maſter's want of friendſhip and ſincerity.

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very obnoxious to the commons—The bill of ſupply paſſed at length—Impoſſibility of providing a fleet to face the enemy—Humiliating and dangerous ſituation of England—Various efforts to bring about a peace—Alternative propoſed by France—Embaſſadors ſent by all parties to Breda—Death of the lord treaſurer—His office put into commiſſion—Dutch fleet enters the Thames—Debates in council—Peace concluded.

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Gloomy proſpect at the opening of the new year.

THE proſpect of national affairs, at the commencement of the new year, was very gloomy; and as the year advanced, the clouds ſeemed to grow thicker and heavier. The king of France, whoſe friendſhip his majeſty had endeavoured to cultivate with the utmoſt aſſiduity, publiſhed, on the nineteenth of January, a declaration of war againſt England, and ſeized upon ſome Engliſh property in his ports with circumſtances of unuſual injuſtice. But neither thoſe acts of ingratitude and baſeneſs, nor the great naval preparations he was making, nor the viſible aſſiſtance of force which he ſent to the Dutch, excited ſo much alarm, or did ſo much injury, as his ſecret and inviſible intrigues. I have already mentioned their pernicious effects in Denmark. Monſieur Pompone had alſo been ſent to Sweden, with a large ſum of money, to retain that country in its dependance on France: the emperor of Germany was diverted by the ſame influence from attending to ſome very inviting offers made him

him by our court *; and to crown the whole of those pernicious machinations, the bishop of Munster was forced to relinquish an enterprize, from which immense advantages had been expected. CHAP. III. 1666.

Defeat of the bishop of Munster's enterprize.

It hath been before observed, that when the bishop first thought of making war upon Holland, he acquainted the king of France with his intentions, and received such an answer as made him very confident he should meet with no obstruction from thence. That confidence was one of the strongest reasons for the king's concluding the treaty, and advancing great sums of money to the bishop upon his promise and engagement, that he would fix himself with his army within the territories of the States General before the end of the winter; and that against the spring, when the king's fleet should be ready for sea, he would at the same time march with twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, into the heart of their country, to cause a diversion of the enemy by land, and so promote the king's maritime operations.

* Downing proposed to Friquet, the emperor's agent, to negotiate a league between his imperial majesty and the king his master, on the express conditions of never coming to an agreement with the States, till the emperor should obtain full satisfaction for all the injuries and oppressions which they had committed on the neighbouring princes, who were vassals of the empire.

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But the French miniſtry, from the firſt knowledge they had of his purpoſe, and before their declaration on the behalf of the Dutch, ſent ſecretly to the neighbouring princes not to join the biſhop in an undertaking, to which many of them were otherwiſe very ſtrongly inclined. The elector of Brandenburg, who in expectation of recovering Weſel and other towns then poſſeſſed by Holland, had given hopes to the biſhop of a powerful aſſiſtance, was now perſuaded totally to decline any conjunction with him, upon a promiſe that he ſhould find his own account better from the friendſhip of France. The dukes of Lunenburg, in like manner, who had abundant argument of quarrel with Holland, and who had made the biſhop believe that they would join him, and had made levies of ſoldiers for that purpoſe, were prevailed upon by the ſame way not only to deſiſt from helping the biſhop, but to declare that they would oppoſe him, and ſerve the Dutch with all their forces, if he purſued his hoſtile deſigns. An envoy was even ſent to the biſhop himſelf, offering the mediation and interpoſition of France between him and the Dutch, with ſome menaces in caſe of his rejecting it; and as the biſhop ſtill continued to gather troops, and to give new commiſſions for enliſting men in different parts of Germany, the princes, who permitted thoſe levies, were told, that if they thus connived at and aſſiſted, inſtead of preventing

venting the incurſion of the biſhop of Munſter, they would involve the empire in a war.

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All this however did not intimidate the biſhop: he drew his forces together; and having got permiſſion from the marquis of Caſtel Rodrigo, then governor of Flanders, to make levies in thoſe provinces, without noiſe or avowing it, he marched with his army into the dominions of the States. Prince Maurice drew together as many of the Dutch troops as could be ſpared out of the different garriſons, in order to check the biſhop's progreſs; but finding in ſome light ſkirmiſhes, that the firmneſs of his men was not to be depended upon, he cautiouſly avoided a general engagement. The biſhop therefore advanced boldly; took a place or two in the very ſight of the enemy; and, having gained an advantageous ſituation, began to faſten himſelf in full aſſurance of increaſing his army, in ſpite of all diſcouragements, before the ſpring.

The king of France, perceiving that nothing but ſuperior force could make the biſhop deſiſt, demanded of the governor of Flanders a licence for the paſſage of ſome troops through ſuch a part of the provinces. The governor dared not deny him, having poſitive orders from his court to be very careful that no diſguſt, or pretence for a quarrel ſhould be given to France. Upon this permiſſion the French troops marched into Flanders; and in the

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the firſt place, they fell upon the levies made for the biſhop, whether in their way, or out of their way, killing ſome, and diſperſing the reſt, or taking them priſoners. Then joining the army under prince Maurice, by the time the biſhop had notice of the late diſaſter, they ſpeedily advanced upon his quarters and beat ſome of his troops. The poor biſhop, finding himſelf deſerted by the princes, who with great promiſes had encouraged his enterprize *, was obliged to ſubmit; and even heart-broken ſigned a treaty with the French, who then were careful enough of his honour and intereſt in the conditions with the Dutch, as of an ally, whoſe ſervices they might want in another conjuncture.

The news of this treaty, which was ſigned at Cleves on the eighteenth of April, blaſted the king's fondeſt hopes, and diſconcerted all his meaſures. It was, indeed, the moſt ſenſible blow, except the plague, that had been felt from the beginning of the war. Some of his majeſty's beſt adviſers, who never liked his exceſſive deſire of ſecuring the friendſhip of France, availed themſelves of this late event, to inflame his reſentment againſt that court, and to urge him to attempt the effecting of a ſeparate peace with Holland, which they had

* The biſhop was not properly ſupported even by England; and on the failure of the promiſed ſubſidies four thouſand of his men revolted; ſo that at this time he was literally in a ſtate of univerſal deſertion.

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reaſon to believe would not be found impoſſible. It was well known that the States were far from being ſatisfied with the conduct of the French, who had amuſed them with the poſitive promiſe of immediate aſſiſtance at the beginning of the war; and yet, under the pretence of mediating a peace, looked on very unconcernedly, or rather well pleaſed to ſee them beaten, and their own people ready to riſe againſt the government. The deſigns of the French upon Flanders were ſo eaſily penetrated as muſt have given the States another juſt occaſion of jealouſy. That country could not defend itſelf with its own forces; and it was natural to ſuppoſe that the king of France depended upon this war between England and Holland, as what muſt hinder both theſe nations from giving it any aſſiſtance. Then the Dutch might well judge what their own portion muſt be, when that ſcreen was removed, which was their beſt ſecurity againſt ſo formidable a neighbour. Theſe rational preſumptions of the facility of a ſeparate peace were farther confirmed by ſecret intelligence through a channel lately opened, of which it is neceſſary to take ſome farther notice.

Correſpondence entered into with the Orange faction in Holland.

There was one Buat, a native of France, who by his military ſervices in Holland had ſo far gained the eſteem of the late prince of Orange, as to be appointed captain of his horſe-guards. Having married a Dutch lady of fortune and conſiderable intereſt,

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intereſt, he was continued, after the prince's death, in the command of the ſame troop, which was ſtill preſerved for a guard to the States. Notwithſtanding the diviſion of parties, and his known attachment to the houſe of Orange, he was generally beloved as a brave, honeſt, and ſenſible man; and though immoderately given to wine, yet that being the diſeaſe, or rather the health of the country, it made him not the worſe thought of. He was well known to the king, and much eſteemed by him; and, after his majeſty's return, made a journey into England to congratulate him on his reſtoration, and to renew thoſe profeſſions of affection and duty, which he had often made to his majeſty when abroad.

As ſoon as the war broke out, Buat was very unreſerved in his invectives againſt the promoters of it; and after the conſternation occaſioned by the firſt battle, he cultivated as much as he could the ill humours of all, how mutinous ſoever, who were moſt clamorous for peace. But ſo far from blaming De Witt upon thoſe occaſions, he warmly defended the penſionary, whom he believed to have been reluctantly engaged in the war, and who, in frequent converſations with Buat, had declared his readineſs to concur in any thing which might lead to an accommodation. De Witt had his ſpies every where: he knew well Buat's intimacy with all the Orange faction, and that in every company he vehemently declaimed

declaimed againſt the continuance of the war; but that he alſo did conſtantly and confidently vindicate the penſionary from many imputations in the preſence of thoſe who were leaſt pleaſed with ſuch language. De Witt therefore looked upon him as his friend, and one that might by his intereſt and credit divert ſome of that popular odium and malice, which are not to be deſpiſed in a republic. He renewed to Buat his former profeſſions of his deſire of peace, and among other reaſons for it, mentioned his jealouſy of the French, who, he ſaid, though they had at laſt declared in favour of the Dutch, yet did ſo with a view only of drawing England into ſome conditions, which might facilitate their own enterprize upon Flanders. This, he added, both nations were concerned to prevent by all the ways poſſible, and none was ſo likely as a peace, which would immediately make each of them ſolicitous for their own intereſt: but he could not openly declare theſe ſentiments, as that would ſlacken all the preparations for war, the expediting of which would moſt advance an honourable treaty. Buat then pointing out his intimacy with ſeveral perſons of credit in the Engliſh court, and with lord Arlington, the ſecretary, in particular, offered to write in his own name to that lord, barely to teſtify his good wiſhes for a peace between the two nations, without making any other mention of De Witt, than that he had reaſon to believe the grand penſionary (in whoſe good opinion he had the honour

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nour to be known to have ſome place) would not be unwilling to promote any good overture that ſhould be made. De Witt acquieſced in the propoſal, on condition of firſt ſeeing all the letters that ſhould be ſent, and of having the anſwers conſtantly brought to him.

Upon this encouragement Buat began his correſpondence with lord Arlington; but what he wrote was with ſo much warineſs, being in fact dictated by the penſionary, that it could draw no other anſwers from the ſecretary but in the ſame ſtile, with expreſſions of his majeſty's deſire of peace and eſteem of De Witt, and as if he expected ſome overtures to ariſe from thence. This intelligence had not been long on foot, before Buat began to ſuſpect De Witt's ſincerity, and that he was not ſo well inclined to peace as he pretended to be. The penſionary's countenance was not ſo open as uſual; he grew leſs jealous of the French, and leſs apprehenſive of the mutinous ſpirit of his own countrymen, as he found them more compoſed, and a greater concurrence in making all things ready for the fleet. Theſe obſervations Buat imparted to his boſom friends of the Orange party, with whom he was now ready to concur in fiercer counſels, how to compaſs a peace in ſpite of the penſionary, by a majority of votes in the States, and by inflaming the diſcontents of the people, and raiſing tumults, for the accidental ſuppreſſion whereof there were

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no other forces in view than thoſe horſe-guards commanded by Buat himſelf. He began to concert meaſures accordingly. Deſirous, however, of ſtill retaining the advantage he had by De Witt's knowledge of his correſpondence with England, he ſhewed him a letter received from lord Arlington, who preſſed to be informed of the particulars that would diſpoſe the States to a ſeparate peace, and who had alſo ſent a cypher for the more free and ſafe communication; which cypher was depoſited with all ſeeming confidence in De Witt's hands. But the penſionary was not ſo eaſily impoſed upon: he heard that Buat diſplayed leſs zeal in his defence than formerly: he grew jealous of him; and therefore dictated ſuch an anſwer to lord Arlington's laſt letter as he hoped would put an end to the correſpondence.

It required no very great ſagacity in Buat to perceive ſo manifeſt a diſpoſition in the penſionary to break off all farther advances towards a treaty. He therefore diſpatched a truſty friend, one Silvius, a ſervant to the late princeſs royal, and well known to the king, with a full account of the ſtate of the councils at the Hague, and his diſcovery that De Witt did not deſire a peace, nor would conſent to it, but upon very unreaſonable terms. He then expreſſed the utmoſt confidence from his intimacy with many perſons of the greateſt power, that if his majeſty would ſend to the States General,

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at their next meeting, a meſſage, the ſubſtance of which he offered, blending ſome overtures for a peace with the intereſt of the young prince of Orange, it would be ſupported by ſo powerful a party, and ſo few would adhere to De Witt, that a treaty could not be prevented, even though France ſhould proteſt againſt it. He ſent likewiſe at the ſame time, and by the ſame perſon, another cypher to lord Arlington, with direction that in ſuch letters as were intended for the view of the penſionary the former cypher ſhould be uſed; and in the other letters, which were to be concealed from him, and which were for the moſt part to contain intelligence and advice againſt him, the latter cypher was to be employed.

In addition to thoſe firſt aſſurances, Silvius after his arrival in England, received by every poſt farther accounts of the progreſs made by Buat and his friends, who thought their party ſo much to increaſe, that they did not ſeem to dread an open ſtruggle. As the king had no miniſter at the Hague to preſent ſuch a meſſage to the States, the way propoſed by Buat was, that he himſelf ſhould at the proper time deliver it to De Witt, who durſt not conceal it; and if he ſhould, there would be ways enough found to publiſh it to his reproach; nor could he take any advantage of Buat for his correſpondence with their enemies, becauſe it had been entered into with his approbation. But for

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the better ſecurity in ſending the propoſed meſſage, and the better information of all the perſons engaged, it was reſolved by his majeſty, at a meeting of the ſelect committee, that Silvius ſhould return; and, if Buat thought fit to decline the delivery of the king's letter, and no better way could be found for that purpoſe, that Silvius might preſent it in the manner his friends there ſhould direct, and avow his having been at London to ſolicit his own pretences ſince the death of the princeſs his miſtreſs, and that he had received the letter from the king's own hand. This plan, though laid with ſuch preſumptions of ſucceſs, was defeated by a fatal overſight of Buat's in one of his drunken fits.

Diſcovery of the conſpiracy againſt De Witt.

After Silvius's departure, letters paſſed as uſual between Buat and lord Arlington for two or three poſts; and one day Buat, after having made too free with the bottle in the company of his jovial friends, happened to meet De Witt, and being aſked, when he had any letter from England, and how affairs went there, he ſuddenly anſwered, that he had juſt received one, which he had not yet decyphered. He thereupon took a letter out of his pocket, and caſting his eyes (which were never good, and now worſe by the effect of drinking) upon the ſuperſcription, he gave it to the penſionary, and ſaid he would go with him, that they might decypher it together, according to cuſtom. But he had delivered the wrong letter; and De

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Witt, perceiving by a ſingle glance that it was not the uſual cypher, deſired Buat to walk before, and he would preſently overtake him, after he had ſpoken a few words at a houſe in his way. The penſionary ſtopt juſt to give an order for immediately arreſting Buat, and ſearching his houſe, to ſecure his cabinet and all his papers. The other cypher was quickly found, and many letters which diſcovered the whole plot. A court of juſtice was ſpeedily erected; and in three days, according to the expedition uſed in ſuch caſes, Buat loſt his head upon a ſcaffold. Silvius, who was then upon his journey, hearing that Buat was arreſted, did not wait to learn farther particulars, but made his eſcape back. The reſt of the knot, thus broken, diſperſed themſelves: the burgomaſter of Rotterdam, and two or three others of note made all the haſte they could into England: ſome thought themſelves ſecure in Antwerp and other parts of Flanders: ſome were ſeized upon within the dominions of the States, and impriſoned; but for want of clear proofs, few of them were put to death. The troop of horſe-guards, of which Buat had the command, were reformed. They had before been permitted to wear the livery and to bear the name of the prince of Orange's guard, though their duty was to attend the States. But their name and uniform were now changed; nor were they permitted to ſhew the ſmalleſt outward reverence for the young prince, whoſe hopes by this accident

accident were almoſt extinguiſhed. De Witt ſtood firmer upon his feet than ever, and directed all preparations for the war without controul. All preſent expectations in England vaniſhed, while the penſionary informed France of the dangers to which he had been expoſed on account of his attachment to that court, and of the great offers which had been made him, if he would have deſerted its intereſt. CHAP. III. 1666.

From this view of our diſappointments abroad, it is time to turn our attention to the ſtate of things at home. After Chriſtmas the extreme malignity of the plague began to abate. During the month of February the weather was as it could be wiſhed, deep ſnow and ſevere froſt, which probably ſtopt the ſpreading of the contagion, though it put an end to thoſe that were already infected, the number of the dead being for a week or two very little diminiſhed. But in March this dreadful calamity gradually diſappeared, after having ſwept away above a hundred thouſand perſons. For though the bills of mortality did not make the number amount to fourſcore thouſand, yet thoſe who could compute very well, did not think that it would be an extravagant calculation to ſuppoſe that almoſt double that number had been carried off. The frequent death of the clerks and ſextons of pariſhes hindered the exact account of every week; and what made it ſtill more uncertain was Decreaſe of the plague.

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the vaſt number of perſons, who were buried in fields and gardens, whereof no church-warden, or other officers had notice.

Such dreadful ravages neceſſarily obſtructed diſpatch in every part of the public ſervice, but were more particularly felt in fitting out the fleet. So many ſeamen had died of the plague, Stepney and the places adjacent, which were their common habitations, being almoſt depopulated, that after other difficulties were removed, it ſeemed almoſt impoſſible to procure ſailors and mariners enough. Warrants were iſſued for preſſing watermen, and ſtripping all merchant-ſhips; which turned not ſo much to benefit one way, as it did to loſs another way. Yet, notwithſtanding every effort that could be uſed, it was near the middle of May, before the fleet was manned and completely equipt for ſea.

Profligacy and extravagance of the court.

When the parliament at Oxford was prorogued, it was to a day in April; but the king had reaſon to believe that they would not ſo ſoon be in good humour enough to give more money, which was the principal end of calling them together. His majeſty therefore thought fit to diſpenſe with their attendance at that time, and cauſed them to be prorogued to the twentieth of September following. In the mean time the court abounded in all ſorts of exceſſes. There had been ſome hope during the abode at Oxford that the queen was with child;

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child; and whilſt that hope laſted, the king ſeemed to impoſe ſome reſtraint on his inordinate appetites and pleaſures. Several perſons were then inclined to believe, that if he had a child by his lawful wife, it might have contributed to break off many fatal connections, and to put an end to thoſe extravagant expences of money and time, which diſturbed and corrupted his nature, and which expoſed him to the temptations of thoſe, who had all the traps and ſnares to catch and detain him.

The imagination of the queen's breeding was one cauſe of her ſtay at Oxford, and her ſtay there was the longer, becauſe ſhe miſcarried, when ſhe intended to begin her journey. The doctors declared, that it was a real miſcarriage ripe enough to make a judgment of the ſex. Yet ſome of the women, who had more credit with the king, aſſured him that it was only a falſe conception, and that ſhe had not been at all with child; and though his majeſty had, upon a former occaſion, declared to the queen his mother and others, that upon his own knowledge her majeſty had miſcarried of a ſon, yet he ſuffered himſelf now to be ſo far impoſed upon by thoſe ladies, that he poſitively believed that ſhe never had been, and never could be with child. From that time he took little pleaſure in her converſation, and indulged himſelf without the leaſt reſtraint in ſuch diſſolute company, as drove every thing ſerious out of his thoughts.

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Lady Caſtlemaine's influence.

Lady Caſtlemaine, who had never declined in favour, was now greater in power than ever. She was with child again, and well enough contented that his majeſty ſhould entertain an amour with another lady, whoſe friendſhip ſhe even courted, perhaps out of confidence, that the king would never prevail upon the other lady, who was known to be a perſon of great modeſty and diſcretion *. Her own great object was to ſecure the king's eſteem by ſuch ſeeming compliance, and to get a good proviſion for herſelf and children. In ſolicitations of this kind ſhe was never backward: ſhe procured round ſums of money out of the privy purſe, where ſhe had placed Mr. May, and other aſſignments in other names, ſo as to be leſs taken notice of, though in great proportions. Yet all amounted to little more than to pay her debts, (which ſhe had in a few years contracted to an inconceivable greatneſs) and to defray her conſtant expences, which were almoſt boundleſs, in coaches and horſes, clothes and jewels, without any thing of generoſity, or gratifying any of her family, or ſo much

* It is ſuppoſed, that the writer here means Mrs. Stewart, the king's near relation, of whom he was ſo extravagantly enamoured, that he intended to divorce his queen, in order to marry this new miſtreſs. The earl of Clarendon, to prevent, this, perſuaded the young duke of Richmond to pay honourable addreſſes to that lady, and to eſpouſe her privately. The king was ſo enraged at the diſcovery, that he baniſhed the duke with his new ducheſs from court, and never forgave the chancellor.

much as satisfying any of her father's creditors, some of whom were very clamorous. Her name was not used in any suits for the grant of lands in this country, because she thought the chancellor and treasurer might oppose such grants, and she did not wish to have any occasion to try the kindness of either of them; and so all the suits she made of that kind were with reference to Ireland, where they had no title to obstruct, nor any natural opportunity of knowing what was granted: in that kingdom, therefore, she procured the settlement of some very valuable estates upon herself and her children.

The king wholly governed by an unprincipled junto.

But all the mischief, however great, was not confined to this shameful waste of the public resources, at a time when the exigencies of the state should have suggested the strictest œconomy. The most faithful servants of the crown, whose known virtues and propriety of conduct were a reproach to the debauchery and riot of the court, became the constant butts of ridicule and satire at the nightly meetings. Lady Castlemaine herself was, indeed, very wary in her attempts to lessen the credit of those ministers whom she hated most; but she was ably served by the duke of Buckingham, and by the lords Ashley and Arlington, who at once gratified her resentment, and promoted their own ambitious designs. The method they took in order to ruin any person, who was obnoxious to them,

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was to begin with raiſing a laugh at his expence by the mimicry, or rather diſtortion of all his words and geſtures. After frequently entertaining the king with theſe buffooneries, and placing the foibles of whoever they meant to depreciate in a ridiculous light, they knew the tranſition would be eaſy from laughter to contempt; and then by continual, though almoſt imperceptible attacks, they widened the breach in a man's character, which was firſt effected under the ſhew of mirth, ſo as to let in calumny and ſcandal enough to deſtroy the beſt built reputation.

By ſuch artifice thoſe deſigning courtiers deſtroyed the credit of every one, who did not belong to their junto, and obtained a complete aſcendancy over the king. All vacancies were filled up, all honours conferred, and all public meaſures regulated by their advice. Their requeſts became orders to his majeſty, without his perceiving it; for he could never refuſe any favour to thoſe, who knew how to profit by his weakneſs, and to flatter his predominant paſſions. It was, indeed, the great infirmity both of the king and his brother to be too fond of the groſſeſt adulation. They were alſo much inclined to like men at firſt ſight, and did not love the converſation of perſons many years older than themſelves, for they thought age not only troubleſome, but impertinent. Through an abſurd deſire of ſending every body

body away satisfied, they were very unguarded in their promises, though not very scrupulous in the performance of them. They knew not how to deny, and less to strangers, than to their old and tried friends; not out of bounty, or generosity, which was a flower that never did grow naturally in the heart of either of the families from which they were descended, that of Stewart, or the other of Bourbon; but from a real incapacity of resisting the subtle approaches of flattery and insinuation. From these defects, or unhappy constitution of mind, several of the misfortunes, which attended either of them, or those who served them honestly, had their rise and growth, of which there will be frequently occasion to say much more.

Separation of the fleet.

Towards the latter end of May, prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle set sail with the fleet, and visited the coast of Holland; but concluding from some intelligence they met with, that the Dutch fleet would not be ready in a month, they returned with some prizes to the Downs. Here it was proposed, that prince Rupert should be detached with part of the fleet to oppose the French admiral, who was reported to be under sail in order to join the Dutch. An express was sent from the Downs, stating these particulars, and soliciting orders for such an enterprize. Lord Arlington about the same time received accounts from Holland that the Dutch were not yet manned, and that the

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the ſquadron in particular, which was in the Texel, and was to join De Ruyter in the Weelins, was very unprovided. He had alſo poſitive information from France, that the duke of Beaufort, who commanded the French fleet, had ſailed from Breſt on ſuch a day; and though the wind had not yet been directly favourable for him, it was concluded that he muſt be well advanced in his way: he had no port to befriend him, till he got round near Calais. But though lord Arlington ſeemed to rely much on the accuracy of his intelligence, yet as the other ſecretary was aſſured by ſome of his correſpondents in Holland that the Dutch ſquadrons were completely equipt, and would join in a few days, the council very juſtly apprehending the accidents that might follow from the diviſion of our fleet, ſent two of the members, ſir George Carteret and ſir William Coventry, with orders to repreſent to both the admirals the contradictory intelligence that was received, and the reflections which naturally occurred thereupon; but with diſcretionary powers to the duke of Albemarle to purſue the former purpoſe, if any later advices which he might have received, or any ſtronger objections to the ſeparation of the fleet did not make it adviſeable to relinquiſh the project.

Sir George and ſir William uſed ſuch expedition, that they returned the next day with an account, that the ſtate of the Dutch fleet was confirmed

firmed to be the ſame as lord Arlington had heard; and that they believed the other information reſpecting the duke of Beaufort to be very probable; whereupon it had been concluded with a mutual conſent and approbation, that prince Rupert ſhould take twenty of the ſhips, which he had already choſen, to meet the French, though they were ſuperior in number, while the duke of Albemarle remained in the Downs with the reſt. 1666.

It ſoon appeared which of the ſecretaries had the better intelligence; for the very next day after the departure of the prince, advice came from the duke of Albemarle that he had unqueſtionable information that the Dutch were come out of their harbours. Upon this, ſir William Coventry was directed to prepare orders to prince Rupert immediately to return; as there could be no doubt of finding him for ſome days on the weſtern coaſt. Sir William got the orders ſigned about twelve o'clock at night, and ſent them to lord Arlington, whoſe duty he thought it was to charge a meſſenger with them; but his lordſhip was gone to bed, and his ſervants durſt not diſquiet him; a tenderneſs not accuſtomed to be in the family of a ſecretary. But whether they did not awake him, as he pretended, or whether being awake he deferred it, the order was not ſent away till next day, and never reached prince Rupert till he had tacked about of himſelf, upon hearing the diſtant thunder of cannon,

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non, which he knew muſt proceed from an engagement. But the wind, which wafted that ſound to his ears, being directly againſt him, he could make little way that day, or the night following. Whoſe fault it was, that thoſe important orders were not ſent with more diſpatch, was diſputed with ſome warmth between ſir William Coventry and lord Arlington, the former inſiſting on his having prepared them in due time, and the latter as poſitively denying that he had the leaſt notice of their contents. But though the negligence was very miſchievous in its effect, it was never properly inquired into: the perſons, to whom it was owing, were both too great men to be queſtioned in any judicatory.

Deſperate conflicts at ſea.

The duke of Albemarle, after the notice he had received of the motion of the Dutch, weighed anchor about three o'clock in the morning on the firſt of June; and about four hours after, the ſcouts came in with notice, that the Dutch fleet was to the leeward. A council was immediately called of the flag-officers, who reſolved, that it was neither ſafe, nor honourable to decline the battle; and truly in ſuch conſultations, where the duke preſided, as he had conceived ever ſince Cromwell's time a great contempt of the Dutch, whoever propoſed any wary advice, was ſure to incur his diſpleaſure, and ran great hazard of being reputed a coward. The reſolution of fighting the enemy

enemy being taken, they bore up with a full wind; and De Ruyter eaſily perceiving the inferiority of their numbers *, made what ſail he could to meet them.

It was about two in the afternoon when the engagement began, and the Engliſh had got the wind, which was ſo high that they could not carry out their lower tiers. The admiral, who was amongſt the foremoſt in the attack, was ſoon ſo ſhattered in his rigging and maſts, that he was compelled to get off, and anchor, that he might mend what was amiſs. Many of his ſquadron alſo had their main-yards ſhot off, and received ſuch damage in their tackling, (which was the chief aim of the Dutch) that they could hardly govern their ſhips. By this means the enemy got the wind, and the battle continued with great fierceneſs till ten at night, when all were willing to have ſome reſt.

The fight was renewed at ſix o'clock next morning; and the Dutch in the courſe of the day, being re-inforced by the arrival of ſixteen new ſhips, puſhed their advantage, while the Engliſh ſuſtained

* The Dutch fleet conſiſted of ſeventy-one ſhips of the line, beſides ſeveral frigates, fireſhips, and yatchts; and the Engliſh fleet, in conſequence of the detachment under the command of prince Rupert, was reduced to fifty-eight ſhips of the line, with a few frigates and fireſhips.

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the unequal conteſt for ſeveral hours with unparalleled ſkill and heroiſm. The whole fleet ſeemed animated by the example of their commander, who never appeared to ſuch advantage as upon this perilous occaſion, where he diſplayed the moſt conſummate judgment, and the greateſt perſonal bravery *. It was, however, happy for the Engliſh that the night again interrupted the ſucceſſes of an enemy ſo ſuperior in ſtrength and numbers, which no efforts of valour were found ſufficient to counterbalance.

The duke finding by the reports made to him of the ſtate of all parts of the fleet, that many of the ſhips were ſo diſabled, that there was reaſon to fear they would hardly hold out to recover the ſhore, cauſed all thoſe ſhips to be put before the wind, and to make all the ſail they could, and he himſelf, with ſixteen of the beſt fighting ſhips all in a line, cloſed the rear, to cover their retreat. A breeze, which ſprung up about three in the morning, favoured the admiral's purpoſe, ſo that though

* Though patriotiſm, dignity of mind, and conſcious rectitude are undoubtedly the moſt invigorating principles of true courage, yet it is very evident from this inſtance of heroiſm in ſo ſervile, perfidious, and unprincipled a man as Monk, "that an idea of military honour, whether true or falſe, can exiſt in an individual, without the aſſociation of any other principle of honour; and that a character may be adorned with perſonal bravery, without the participation of any moral virtue."

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the enemy uſed every exertion in the purſuit, they did not come within gun-ſhot till four o'clock the next afternoon. By this time the Engliſh deſcried about twenty ſail ſtanding towards them, which they concluded to be prince Rupert's ſquadron; and ſo being earneſt to join, they edged up towards them, but ſo unfortunately, that ſome of the flag-ſhips ran a-ground off the Galloper ſands, but all got off, except the Royal Prince, which, till the late war, was looked upon as the beſt ſhip in the world. It ſtuck ſo faſt, that no art or induſtry could move it; ſo that the enemy ſet it on fire, and took the commander, ſir George Aſkew and the whole crew priſoners. After the junction with prince Rupert, our fleet bore to the northward, that they might get clear off the ſands; and thereby the enemy got the wind again.

On the fourth day, the battle began again, about eight o'clock in the morning, with extraordinary confidence on both ſides. The Dutch ſtill continued to direct a great part of their fire at the rigging, while the Engliſh uſed every endeavour to board the others, as all their own hopes lay in cloſe action. But the deſign of the enemy ſucceeded better, inſomuch that one of our vice-admirals, and ſeveral of our beſt ſhips were ſo diſabled, that they bore off from the battle, in order to mend and repair. The reſt fought with unabated fury; nor was it eaſy to ſay, to which ſide the

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the victory ſeemed moſt to incline. A very heavy miſt, which came on about ſix o'clock in the evening, terminated the encounter; and both parties, weary no doubt of ſuch a dreadful ſtruggle, in which prodigious numbers were killed, and many ſhips ſunk and burnt, ſeparated without looking after each other, and haſtened to their reſpective coaſts. Thus ended that great action, wherein either ſide pretended to have advantage, and both were in truth conſiderable ſufferers *.

Moſt of our ſhips received ſuch damage in their maſts, yards, rigging and hulls, that it was with great difficulty they reached the coaſt; and were then diſperſed into different places, where they might be ſooneſt repaired. As the utmoſt diligence and expedition were uſed to prevent the enemy from enjoying any triumph, the damaged

* According to Rapin, the Engliſh loſt in theſe four days twenty-three great ſhips, beſides ſeveral others of leſs note, ſix thouſand men, and two thouſand ſix hundred priſoners; and the Dutch loſt only ſix ſhips, two thouſand eight hundred ſoldiers, and fourſcore ſailors, beſides three vice-admirals, with ſome other officers. But Echard ſtates the account very differently, aſſerting that the loſs of the Dutch amounted to fifteen ſhips, and that of the Engliſh only to nine. The accuracy of either is now of little conſequence; but it may with great truth be aſſerted, that though the Dutch ſeemed to keep the poſſeſſion of the ſea, the Engliſh loſt no glory in retiring to their harbours, after having for four days kept the victory undecided, with ſo great a diſparity of force.

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ſhips were refitted, and brought together again to a general rendezvous at the Nore in leſs than three weeks. Reinforcements were alſo ſent them every day of ſuch ſhips as were finiſhed and completely equipt at the ſeveral dock-yards, and of all that could be ſpared from every other ſtation; ſo that before they were ordered out again in queſt of the enemy, the fleet was augmented to above a hundred ſail.

Another naval engagement.

De Ruyter was hovering about in expectation of being joined by the French ſquadron; and though his number was now ſomewhat inferior to the Engliſh, he ſeemed to prepare for action with undaunted firmneſs. The battle began at ten in the morning, and was continued till two in the afternoon with as much heat and obſtinacy as had prevailed in any former encounter. But the ſquadron commanded by Tromp being either through accident or indiſcretion ſeparated from the reſt of the Dutch fleet *, De Ruyter took advantage of the wind,

* The vice-admiral's ſeparation from the commander in chief is by ſome aſcribed to treachery, as Tromp was of the prince of Orange's faction, and De Ruyter one of the firmeſt ſupporters of the republican cauſe. But it is not likely that ſo brave a man as Tromp would have been capable of ſuch perfidy from any oppoſition of political ſentiments. Were he even indifferent to ſucceſſes, which in his opinion might only ſerve to give ſtability to De Witt's power, he could not forget the gallant manner in which he himſelf had been lately reſcued by De Ruyter from

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wind, and bore away farther than the Engliſh could follow. Here, however, our fleet took one of their ſixty gun ſhips commanded by vice-admiral Banker, and another ſhip of ſeventy guns, both which were burnt, rather than undergo the poſſible inconvenience of keeping them; and both our commanders took care to bear up as cloſe as poſſible to the enemy during the night.

De Ruyter's well-conducted retreat.

The next morning the moſt ſpirited efforts were uſed to cloſe with De Ruyter, but the wind leſſening, it could not be effected. He fought well, but ſtill retreating *, till he got with his diviſion of

certain deſtruction. On the ſecond day of the former engagement Tromp was ſurrounded by the Engliſh, and muſt have been taken, or ſunk, had he not been brought off by De Ruyter's timely and ſpirited interpoſition. Would he repay ſuch ſignal aſſiſtance with the baſeſt ingratitude? Would he, through wilful perverſeneſs, ſuffer his rival in fame to bear away from him the double palm of generoſity and glory? The cauſe of his ſeparation from De Ruyter is much more probably accounted for by Rapin. He ſays, "that while de Ruyter and young Evertzen engaged the red and white ſquadron, Tromp, after a long diſpute, routed the blue ſquadron, commanded by ſir Jeremy Smith. But, *by an unpardonable error*, inſtead of remaining with the fleet, he amuſed himſelf with purſuing the flying ſhips of the enemy." For this *error*, which was attended with very fatal conſequences, he was, upon his return home, diſmiſſed the ſervice.

* This brave man was ſo affected with his diſappointment, as to exclaim, while retreating before the enemy, "Amongſt ſo many bullets, is there not one to put an end to my miſerable life."

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the fleet into his faſtneſs at the Weelings. Another diviſion, that was farther off, and likely to have the benefit of the night, tacked about; which our fleet perceiving endeavoured to get between them and the coaſt; but being ſuddenly becalmed, they dropped anchor about midnight, and in the morning, though they made all the way they could with a little wind, the enemy got ſo cloſe to their own ſhore, and their ſhips drawing leſs water than the Engliſh, that there could be no farther purſuit. The third diviſion alſo, which had been ſeparated from the reſt of the Dutch fleet the day before, recovered the Texel without loſs. Many of our captains were blamed for a want of ardour in the chace of this laſt ſquadron; but prince Rupert and the duke, though they differed in opinion with reſpect to the conduct of ſome of thoſe officers, very wiſely laid aſide all inquiry into the matter, till they ſhould be at more leiſure with leſs inconvenience to determine it.

Fatal blow given to the Dutch commerce.

The enemy being thus ſcattered, our fleet reſolved to ply upon their coaſt, and to annoy their trade, which they did, and took many prizes both homeward and outward-bound of great value. While this interruption was given to the Dutch commerce, another enterprize of ſtill greater importance was undertaken by the advice of one Hemſkirk, who had the command of a ſhip in the ſervice of the States at the beginning of the war,

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but having ſided with Tromp againſt Evertzen in the firſt battle, he would have been hanged, if he had not made his eſcape. From that time he had always been on board with prince Rupert; and now perſuaded the prince and the duke of Albemarle to ſend a detachment under his guidance into the road of Ulye, where, as in a place of the utmoſt ſecurity, all ſhips laden at Amſterdam for the Streights and other parts uſed to remain for two or three days previous to their departure, while final orders were preparing. The execution of this deſign was committed to ſir Robert Holmes, who with a number of ſmall veſſels well manned, beſides a body of ſtout foot to land upon occaſion, being guided by Hemſkirk, entered the road, which was almoſt land-locked, and burnt all the Dutch ſhips lying there *, ſome of which were worth above one hundred thouſand pounds each. Then advancing to the iſle of Schelling, he made a deſcent, and ſet fire to the town of Brandaris, the flames of which, with thoſe of the ſhips, appearing at the break of day ſo near Amſterdam, put the whole city into ſuch conſternation, that they thought the day of judgment was at hand. This was not only the greateſt loſs, but was greater than all the reſt put together, which Holland ſuſtained during the war; and as it occaſioned great triumph in Eng-

* There were above one hundred merchant ſhips, and two men of war deſigned for convoys.

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land, so it filled De Witt with the strongest desire and resolution of revenge before any peace should be consented to; which he effected in a great degree the next year. CHAP. III. 1666.

As there appeared no more likelihood of the Dutch coming out again, the prince and duke returned with the fleet about the middle of August to Southwold Bay, to receive a recruit of men, provisions, and ammunition, having left some ships upon the Dutch coasts to take prizes, and scouts to get intelligence. On the twenty-ninth a little pink brought notice, that the enemy consisting of about fourscore sail were ready to come out from the Weelings; and the following day advice was received of their being out, and steering to the westward, as if in hope of meeting the French *. At seven The fleets parted by a storm.

* Immediately after De Ruyter's defeat, the following letter was written by the French king to his embassador at the Hague, which, being communicated to the States, must have been a strong incitement to their refitting and sending out their fleet again with so much expedition:

"As soon as I received the sad news of the disgrace which had befallen the arms of my allies, I resolved to send this express to you for several reasons: the first, that you may declare to the States, that my grief on this disaster is not less than they feel themselves; but we must, by vigorous resolutions, not only lessen all the prejudices of it, but reduce the English to desire peace in earnest: the second, that you may also assure them, that I will contribute heartily in every thing which depends on me and my forces, to procure this desirable end.

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ſeven o'clock next morning our fleet bore to ſea, and before noon diſcovered the Dutch about four leagues to leeward; but they ſtood away for the coaſt of Flanders, whilſt the Engliſh were ſo entangled upon the Galloper ſands, that they could not follow till late in the afternoon, ſo that it was night before they came near each other; and then ſeveral guns were fired to little purpoſe.

" England is not in a condition, for the ſmall advantages which ſhe has gained in the conteſt with the United Provinces, to reſiſt the efforts of three ſuch powers as are thoſe of France, Denmark, and the States in junction.

" If the States have it in their power and their will to put their fleet again to ſea, as ſoon as it is repaired, to act as long as the ſeaſon ſhall laſt, you may, in my name, propoſe to them the junction of my fleet, and ſince it cannot fail of arriving in a few days at Rochelle or Belleiſle, if it is not there already, you may now conſult with the ſieur De Witt, and the other commiſſioners, of the moſt proper and ſafe ways for their junction, and give me an account with all convenient ſpeed, that not a minute of uſeful time may be loſt,

" You ſhall moreover tell the States, that I this day write to the chevalier De Toulon, whom I have lately ſent to Copenhagen, in the ſame quality of my embaſſador as he had in Sweden, to uſe his utmoſt endeavours, and moſt preſſing inſtances, in my name, with the king of Denmark, to incline him to come to a reſolution to join preſently part of his fleet with mine and with that of the ſaid States.

" I would not cloſe this letter without telling you, that you ſhould again recommend from me to the States, to accommodate matters with Sweden, who ſeeing herſelf deſpiſed, or uſed hardly, may, in this juncture, take reſolutions which may be very prejudicial to us; and we know the Swedes never want pretences to do whatever they think to be for their intereſt."

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As ſoon as it was light, they found that the Dutch had got to leeward as far as they could diſcover near St. John's Bay beyond Calais; but the weather proved ſo boiſterous, and the Dutch kept ſo cloſe in to the ſhore, that after ſome unavailing attempts for two days to bring them to action, our fleet was compelled by the ſtorm to come away to St. Helen's. In this tempeſt the French had a very narrow eſcape. A gentleman of that nation, who had juſt returned out of England (whither they were ſuffered to reſort with as much liberty as if there was no war, whilſt no Engliſhman could be ſafe there) hearing upon his arrival at Calais, that the duke of Beaufort was every day expected, diſpatched two or three barks after him with information how and where the Engliſh lay. One of them happened to find him towards the evening, whereupon he changed his courſe, and by the darkneſs of the night got into the road of Dieppe, with the loſs only of a ſeventy gun ſhip under the command of the vice-admiral, who, knowing nothing of the intelligence, purſued his former direction, and fell into the hands of the Engliſh. The continuance of the ſtorm prevented any farther engagement; but the ſame winds, and at the ſame time, did much more miſchief at land than at ſea.

Fire at London.

It was upon the firſt of September at midnight, or near the morning of Sunday the ſecond of the month, that the memorable and terrible fire of

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London broke out in a baker's houſe, at the end of Thames-ſtreet next the Tower. As that ſtreet contained many timber-houſes, and was ſurrounded with ſeveral narrow alleys, the whole neighbourhood was in ſo ſhort a time reduced to aſhes, that few perſons could ſave any of their goods, but were as a heap of people almoſt petrified with ſudden conſternation. Buckets were immediately ordered by the city magiſtrates; but the fire was too ravenous to be extinguiſhed with ſuch quantities of water as could be conveyed by thoſe inſtruments. It faſtened ſtill upon new materials, before it had deſtroyed the old; and though it raged furiouſly all that day, no man knowing what remedy to apply, nor the magiſtrates what orders to give, but all ſtanding amazed as ſpectators only, yet the progreſs of the flames was ſomewhat regular, and the greateſt apprehenſion was for the Tower, and all conſiderations entered upon for ſecuring that place. But in the night the wind changed, and carried the danger from thence with ſuch great and irreſiſtible violence, that as it kept the Engliſh and Dutch fleets from grappling, when they were ſo near each other, ſo it ſcattered the fire from purſuing the line it was in, and ſpread it over the city. Thoſe who went late to bed, at a great diſtance from any place where the fire prevailed, were awakened before morning with their own houſes being in a blaze; and whilſt endeavour was uſing to quench that, other houſes were ſaid to be burning,

burning, which were near no place whence the fire could be ſuppoſed to have reached them. All this kindled another fire in the breaſts of men, almoſt as dangerous as that within their houſes.

Monday morning produced firſt a jealouſy, and then an univerſal belief and perſuaſion, that the fire came not by chance. People ſaid, that it was of little conſequence where it began; but that its breaking out in ſeveral places at ſo great a diſtance from each other, made it evident that it was the effect of ſome horrid conſpiracy. This led to another concluſion, that the incendiaries muſt be the Dutch or French, with whom we were then at war; and all of either nation, who could be met with, or ſtrangers of what nation ſoever, were laid hold of, and after much ill uſage thrown into priſon. The ſame ſuſpicion was ſoon extended to the papiſts, who were in the ſame predicament of guilt and danger; and who quickly found that their only ſafety conſiſted in keeping within doors, though ſome were dragged even thence, and carried to priſon.

When this rage ſpread as far as the fire, and every hour brought reports of ſome bloody effects of it, the king diſtributed many of the privy council into ſeveral quarters of the city, to prevent by their authority thoſe inhumanities, which he heard were committed. But neither they nor any body elſe

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elſe thought it ſafe to declare, that they believed the fire came by accident, or that it was not a plot of the Dutch, the French, and the papiſts to burn the city. This was ſo generally believed, and in the beſt company, that whoever ſaid the contrary, was ſuſpected to be one of the conſpirators, or at leaſt a favourer of them. It could not be conceived how a houſe, that was diſtant a mile from any part of the fire, could ſuddenly be in a flame without ſome particular malice. Inſtances of this kind were alledged without number; nor did there want the teſtimony of witneſſes, who ſaid they ſaw the villainy committed, and apprehended men, who, they were ready to ſwear, threw fire balls into houſes, which were preſently burning.

Lord Hollis and lord Aſhley, who had their quarters aſſigned about Newgate-market, and the ſtreets adjacent, had many brought to them in cuſtody for pretended crimes of this nature; and ſaw, at a little diſtance, the people gathered together in great diſorder. On going nearer, they perceived a man hauled about and very ill uſed by the mob, whom they knew to be a ſervant to the Portugueſe ambaſſador; and who was preſently brought to them. A ſubſtantial citizen was ready to make oath, that he ſaw this man put his hand in his pocket, and throw a fire-ball into a ſhop, upon which the houſe immediately took fire; and that being himſelf on the other ſide of the way, he cried out

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out to ſtop that gentleman, who accordingly was ſoon ſeized, and his ſword, which he was going to draw, taken away from him, and he not ſpeaking, or underſtanding Engliſh, was uſed in the manner before deſcribed. His pockets had alſo been diligently ſearched, but none of thoſe combuſtibles were found upon him. Lord Hollis told him what he was accuſed of, at which he ſtood in great amazement. His lordſhip aſked him what it was he pulled out of his pocket, and threw into the houſe. He anſwered, that he did not think he had put his hand in his pocket; but he remembered very well, that as he walked in the ſtreet, he ſaw a piece of bread upon the ground, which he took up and laid on a ſhelf in the next houſe; which is a cuſtom or ſuperſtition ſo natural to a Portugueſe, that if the king of Portugal were walking, and ſaw a piece of bread on the ground, he would take it up with his own hand, and keep it till he found a fit place to lay it down. The houſe being in view, the lords with many of the people walked to it, and found the piece of bread juſt within the door upon a board, where he ſaid he had laid it. The houſe on fire was two doors beyond it, but might in a time of ſuch fright and ſuſpicion be eaſily miſtaken for the ſame by the perſon on the other ſide of the way, who ſeeing the Portugueſe put ſomething down, and perceiving a fire burſt out inſtantly, concluded that he was the incendiary. Though both the lords were ſatisfied of

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of the poor man's innocence, they did not ſet him at liberty, for fear of again expoſing him to the fury of the mob; but as if there remained matter enough for farther inquiry, they committed him to the conſtable to be kept by him in his own houſe for ſome hours, when they pretended they would examine him again. The ſame conduct was obſerved with reſpect to many others, who were apprehended in different parts of the town, upon much weaker grounds of ſuſpicion. None were diſcharged, eſpecially if they were foreigners or papiſts, but all ſent to priſon, where they were in much more ſecurity, than if left at full liberty, after they were once known to have been ſuſpected. Moſt of them underſtood their commitment to be from that motive, and were glad of it.

The fire and wind continued in the ſame exceſs all Monday, Tueſday, and Wedneſday till the afternoon; and flung and ſcattered burning brands into all quarters, the nights more terrible than the days, and the glare of the conflagration ſupplying the light of the ſun. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the ravages that were made, or the alarm and diſtraction of the people. Nobody knew where to repoſe for one hour's ſleep: no diſtance was thought ſecure from the fire, which ſuddenly ſtarted up before it was ſuſpected: all the fields were full of women and children, who had made a ſhift to bring thither ſome goods and conveniences to reſt upon,

upon, as ſafer than any houſes were: they yet felt ſuch intolerable heat and drought as if they had been in the midſt of the fire. The country ſent in carts to help thoſe miſerable people, who had ſaved any goods; and by theſe means and the help of coaches, the neighbouring villages were filled with more people than they could well contain, and more goods than they could find room for, ſo that the adjoining fields there became likewiſe as full as thoſe about London and Weſtminſter. 1666.

On Wedneſday morning, when the king ſaw, that neither the fire decreaſed, nor the wind leſſened, he even deſpaired of preſerving Whitehall; but having obſerved, while he rode about with his brother from place to place, that, where there were any vacancies between the houſes, by which the progreſs of the fire was interrupted, it changed its courſe, and went to the other ſide, he gave orders for pulling down many houſes about Whitehall, and ſent ſome of his moſt valuable furniture to Hampton Court. Moſt perſons of quality in the Strand, who had the benefit of the river, got barges and other veſſels for the conveyance of their goods to houſes ſome miles out of town; and as the fire was then in Fleet-ſtreet, ſeveral other families in the Strand, who knew not whither to go, and ſcarce what they did, fled into the ſtreets, that they might not be within when the fire ſhould fall upon their houſes. But contrary to all expectation,

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about four or five o'clock on Wedneſday afternoon, the wind fell, and the fire decreaſed, having burnt all on the ſide of the Thames to the new buildings of the Inner Temple, next to White Friars. It was ſtopt by that vacancy from proceeding farther in that direction; but laid hold on ſome old buildings, which joined to Kam-alley, and ſwept all thoſe into Fleet-ſtreet. The other ſide being likewiſe deſtroyed as far as Fetter-lane, it diſcontinued there, leaving the other part of Fleet-ſtreet to Temple-bar and all the Strand unhurt; and it ceaſed in all other parts of the town about the ſame time.

It now required the utmoſt vigilance to watch the fire that was on the ground, leſt it might break out again. This was the better performed, becauſe thoſe, whoſe houſes were yet ſtanding, had not the courage to ſleep, though their terrors and diſtraction were greatly abated. Some, indeed, were ſtill reſtleſs with fears of a different kind. In their exceſſive jealouſy of the ſuppoſed authors of this dreadful calamity, they were ſo ſottiſh as to believe the moſt abſurd reports, that all the French in town, of whom there was no doubt a very great number, were collected into a body, to proſecute thoſe by the ſword, who had eſcaped the fire. Wild as ſuch an idea was, the inhabitants of a whole ſtreet have been known to run in a great tumult one

one way, upon the rumour that the French were marching at the other end of it: ſo terrified were men with their own apprehenſions.

When the night, though far from being a quiet one, had ſomewhat leſſened the conſternation, the firſt care of government was, that the country might ſpeedily ſupply markets in all places, that thoſe, who had ſaved themſelves from burning, might not be in danger of ſtarving; and there is no doubt, if extraordinary diligence had not been uſed, many would have periſhed that way. The vaſt deſtruction of corn and all other ſorts of proviſions in thoſe parts where the fire had prevailed, not only left the people deſtitute of every thing that was to be eat or drunk; but the bakers and brewers, who inhabited the other parts that were unhurt, had forſaken their houſes, and carried away all that was portable. Many days paſt, before enough of them returned, to fall to their occupations. But the ſupplies from the country poured in very faſt; and in four days, ſcarce a man was to be ſeen in the fields, which were before covered with thoſe, whoſe habitations were burnt. All found ſhelter in the parts which remained of the city, or in the ſuburbs, and the adjacent villages, every body being ready to give all poſſible aſſiſtance to thoſe who appeared to be undone.

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The king was not more troubled at any particular, than at the imagination which poſſeſſed the minds of ſo many, that all this miſchief aroſe from ſome wicked conſpiracy. He appointed the privy council to ſit both morning and evening to receive informations on that head, and to ſend for any perſons who had been committed to priſon upon ſuch evidence as made the greateſt noiſe. He alſo ſent for the lord chief juſtice, who was in the country, to come to town, for the better examination of all ſuggeſtions and allegations of that kind; there having been a malicious report ſcattered about the town, that the court and council had ſo great a prejudice againſt any teſtimony of ſuch a plot, that they diſcountenanced all witneſſes who came before them to declare what they knew. This was without any colour of truth; though many who were produced, as if their teſtimony would remove all doubts, made ſuch ſenſeleſs relations of what they had been told by perſons, whom they knew nothing about, nor where to find them, that it was a hard matter to forbear ſmiling at their evidence.

Some Frenchmen's houſes had been ſearched, in which were found many of thoſe ſhells for ſquibs and other fireworks frequently uſed on rejoicing nights. The men themſelves were well known, having followed that trade many years in town; and one of them was conſtantly employed by the office

office of ordnance for making granadoes. Yet these men did not escape suspicion, but were seized with many others of their country, and remained in prison till their neighbours solicited for their liberty. What most excites wonder is, that in this general rage of the people, none of the foreigners was murdered outright, though many were sorely beaten and bruised.

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There was a very odd accident that confirmed many in what they were before inclined to believe, and startled others who thought the conspiracy impossible. Amongst the Frenchmen, who had been sent to Newgate, there was one Hubert, a young man of five or six and twenty years of age, the son of a famous watchmaker in the city of Rouen; and this fellow had worked in the same profession with several men in London, and had for many years been looked upon as a lunatic both in Rouen and London. This man confessed, "that he had set the first house on fire; that he and three more had been hired in Paris a year before to do it; that they came over to England together to put their design in execution at the time of the plague; that, after their arrival in London, he and two of his companions went into Sweden, but returned in the latter end of August; and that the other two having then gone back to France, he resolved to make the attempt himself." The whole of his confession was so incoherent, that the chief

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juſtice, who was not thought to want rigour, did not believe any thing he ſaid. He was aſked, who it was in Paris that ſuborned him to this action? He anſwered "that he did not know, having never ſeen him before;" and in enlarging on that point he contradicted himſelf in many particulars. Being aſked, what money he had received to perform a ſervice of ſo much hazard, he replied "one piſtole, but was promiſed five more, when he ſhould have done his work;" with many other ſuch unreaſonable things, that every body preſent thought him out of his ſenſes. However, they durſt not ſlight the evidence, but put him to a particular, in which he ſeemed ſo fully to confirm all that he had before aſſerted, that they were ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and knew not afterwards what to ſay, or think.

This laſt point, upon which Hubert was queſtioned, and which rendered the whole buſineſs ſingularly ſtrange and unaccountable, was, whether he knew the place, which he had firſt ſet on fire? He anſwered, "that he knew it very well, and would ſhew it to any body." Upon this the chief juſtice, and many aldermen who ſat with him, ſent a guard of ſubſtantial citizens with the priſoner, that he might ſhew them the houſe; and they firſt led him to a place at ſome diſtance from it, and aſked him, if that was it? To which he inſtantly replied, "no; it was lower, nearer to the Thames."

Thames." The houſe, and all that were near it, were ſo covered and buried in ruins, that the owners themſelves, without ſome infallible mark, could hardly tell where their reſpective dwellings had ſtood. But Hubert led the guard directly to the place; and deſcribed the ſituation of the houſe, the ſhape of the little yard, the faſhion of the door and windows, and where he firſt put the fire; and all this with ſuch exactneſs, that they who had dwelt long near it, could not have ſo perfectly accounted for half thoſe particulars. CHAP. III. 1666.

This ſilenced all farther doubts; and though the chief juſtice told the king, that all his other diſcourſe was ſo disjointed, that he did not believe any thing he ſaid, nor was there one man to proſecute or accuſe him, yet upon his own confeſſion, and the relation of all thoſe laſt particulars, the jury found him guilty; and he was executed accordingly. It is farther remarkable, that in all his examinations, he neither ſhewed any ſign of ſorrow for what he ſaid he had done, nor yet ſeemed to juſtify or take delight in it; but being aſked, whether he was not ſorry for the wickedneſs, and whether he intended to do ſo much, he gave no anſwer at all, and with the ſame temper died. The judges, and moſt perſons who were preſent at the trial, concluded that he was a poor diſtracted wretch weary of his life, and choſe to part with it this way; for it was very evident that he might have

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ſaved it, even though he had been guilty, ſince he was only accuſed upon his own confeſſion.

Upon the whole, after the moſt diligent inquiry by the privy-council, and next by a committee appointed by parliament to inveſtigate the matter; no ſatisfactory proof was ever diſcovered of any deſign or combination. Charges were, indeed, brought againſt many, but none of them could be ſubſtantiated; nor was there any probable evidence (that poor creature Hubert only excepted) of any other cauſe of that woeful fire than the firſt accident of its breaking out in a baker's houſe, where there was ſo great a ſtock of faggots, and in the neighbourhood of much combuſtible matter, ſuch as pitch, roſin, and the like, that led it in an inſtant from houſe to houſe in Thames-ſtreet, with the agitation of ſo terrible a wind to ſcatter and diſperſe it.

Let the cauſe be what it would, the effect was very calamitous. Above two-thirds of that great city, and thoſe the wealthieſt parts of it, where the greateſt ſhops and warehouſes ſtood, were reduced to aſhes. The Royal Exchange, with all the ſtreets about it, Lombard-ſtreet, Cheapſide, Pater-noſter-row, all St. Paul's church-yard, as well as the church itſelf, and almoſt all the other churches in the city, Ludgate, the Old Bailey, and the greateſt part of Fleet-ſtreet, were all burnt, without one houſe

houſe remaining *. The eſtimate of what that devouring fire conſumed, over and above the houſes, could never be computed in any degree. In the firſt night it ſwept away the vaſt wealth of Thames-ſtreet, as from its ſuddenneſs, all people being in their beds, when the flames reached their houſes, they could ſave nothing but themſelves. The next day, the violence of the wind increaſed the diſtraction; and before thoſe who were at a conſiderable diſtance, could imagine themſelves to be in any danger, or think it neceſſary to remove their goods, the fire came upon them, and rendered it impoſſible. It happened alſo in a ſeaſon of the year, when a great number of the ſubſtantial citizens and other wealthy men were in the country; whereof many had not left a ſervant in their houſes, thinking themſelves upon all ordinary accidents, more ſecure in the integrity and kindneſs of their neighbours, than they could be in the fidelity of ſervants. Whatever was in ſuch houſes was entirely conſumed, or loſt to the owners. Of this claſs of ab-

* The ravages of this fire are thus deſcribed in one of the inſcriptions on the Monument. "It conſumed eighty-nine churches, the city gates, Guildhall, many public ſtructures, hoſpitals, ſchools, libraries, a vaſt number of ſtately edifices, thirteen thouſand two hundred dwelling houſes, four hundred ſtreets. Of the ſix and twenty wards it utterly deſtroyed fifteen, and left eight others ſhattered and half burnt. The ruins of the city were four hundred thirty-ſix acres, from the Tower by the Thames ſide to the Temple church, and from the north-eaſt gate, along the city wall, to Holborn Bridge."

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ſent men the lawyers in particular ſuſtained a conſiderable loſs, which affected others ſtill more than themſelves. When the fire reached their places of reſidence, eſpecially Serjeant's-Inn, and the part that was conſumed of the Inner Temple, there was ſcarce a man, to whom chambers appertained, in town; ſo that whatſoever was there, money, books, and papers, with the evidences of eſtates depoſited in their hands, were all burnt or loſt.

The damage ſuſtained by the company of ſtationers was eſtimated at no leſs than two hundred thouſand pounds, in which great loſs there was one circumſtance very lamentable. All thoſe, who dwelt near St. Paul's, carried their goods, books, and the like, as others of greater trades did their commodities, into the large vaults under St. Paul's church, before the fire came thither. Thoſe vaults, though all the church above ground was afterwards burnt, ſtill ſtood firm, and preſerved all that was within them, till the impatience of thoſe, who had depoſited property there, and who had loſt their houſes and every thing elſe in the fire, prompted them to open the greateſt and moſt ſpacious vault. It was the fourth day after the fire ceaſed to flame, though it ſtill burned in the ruins, and caſt an intolerable heat. The doors of the vault were no ſooner opened, than, the air from without fanning the ſtrong heat within, the drieſt and moſt combuſtible matters broke into a flame, which conſumed

ſumed all, of what kind ſoever, that till then had been unhurt there. Thoſe, who had committed their goods to ſome ſmaller vaults at a diſtance from the greater, had better fortune; and having learned from the ruin of their friends to have more patience, they waited till the rain fell, and extinguiſhed the fire in all places, and cooled the air; then they ſecurely opened the doors, and got what they had depoſited there.

If ſo vaſt a damage as two hundred thouſand pounds befel that little company of ſtationers in books, paper, and the like, what ſhall we conceive the loſs to have been in other companies, and in articles of the greateſt value? Blackwell-hall, whither the country clothiers had ſent their large annual ſupplies againſt Michaelmas, was conſumed with all this valuable property. Then the loſs in linen, ſilk, and thoſe richer manufactures, far exceeded all poſſible calculation, not to ſpeak of money, plate and jewels, ſome of which were recovered out of the ruins of thoſe houſes, which the owners took care to watch, as containing ſomewhat worth looking for; and in this deluge there were many ready to fiſh.

The lord mayor, though a very honeſt man, was much blamed for want of ſagacity, in the firſt night of the fire, before the wind gave it much advancement. He came, indeed, with great diligence, as

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ſoon as he had notice of it, and was preſent with the firſt, yet having never been uſed to ſuch ſpectacles, his conſternation was equal to that of any body elſe, nor did he know how to apply his authority to the remedying of the preſent diſtreſs. When men, leſs terrified with the object, preſſed him very earneſtly to give orders for the immediate pulling down of ſuch houſes as were neareſt to the fire, the doing whereof at that time might have checked its progreſs, and prevented much of the miſchief that followed, he thought it not ſafe counſel; and made no other anſwer, than that he durſt not do it without the conſent of the owner. His want of ſkill was the leſs wondered at, when it was known afterwards, that ſome gentlemen of the Inner Temple would not endeavour to preſerve the goods, which were in the lodgings of abſent perſons, nor ſuffer others to do it, becauſe, they ſaid, it was againſt the law to break open any man's chamber.

The ſudden repair of ſuch wide-ſpread ruins was almoſt as wonderful as the extent and rapidity of the devaſtation. To ſay that London roſe, like a phœnix, from its aſhes, with renovated beauty, would, indeed, fall ſhort of the truth; for all the new ſtreets and public edifices, diſplayed a beauty and luſtre, with which the city had never before been acquainted. Many improvements were ſuggeſted by the calamity itſelf. In the wide ſtreets and

and brick buildings it was obſerved, that though the fire in the height of its rage was not completely repulſed, it made a much ſlower progreſs; but in narrow lanes, and where the houſes were made of wood, it ſpread with irreſiſtible fury. The ſtreets were therefore widened, and the houſes re-erected with brick; by both which alterations the health of the inhabitants, and the ſecurity, ſtability, and elegance of their dwellings were evidently promoted*. 1666.

Tranſient hope of reform at court.

It was hoped that this tremendous and univerſal calamity, the effects of which covered the whole kingdom, would have made impreſſion, and produced ſome reform in the licentiouſneſs of the court. This was the more expected, as during the fire the king had been heard to ſpeak with great piety of the diſpleaſure God was provoked to; and

* The ſtreets were certainly rendered more open, and the buildings more ſecure and convenient than before; but the full authority of the legiſlature ought to have been immediately called in and exerted, to prevent numberleſs defects and irregularities which aroſe from the ignorance, the caprice, and the parſimony of individuals. It was owing to this neglect, and to the narrow views of private intereſt that ſir Chriſtopher Wren's admirable plan was neglected, which, if it had been carried into execution, would have rendered London the moſt commodious, elegant, and magnificent city in the univerſe.

Dr. Barbon, one of the moſt conſiderable rebuilders of the city, inſtituted at this time an office for inſuring houſes from fire, which afterwards received the ſanction of government.

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no doubt the deep ſenſe of it raiſed many good purpoſes in his royal breaſt. But he was narrowly watched that ſuch melancholy might not long poſſeſs him, the effects whereof would have been much more grievous to his corrupt favourites than all the ravages of the fire. That looſe company often made it a ſubject of wit and mirth to deſcribe the wildneſs of the confuſion all people were in; and in ſuch diſcourſe the ſcripture itſelf was uſed with equal liberty, when they could apply it to their profane purpoſes. Mr. May preſumed to aſſure the king, "that the fire was the greateſt bleſſing that God had ever conferred upon his majeſty, his reſtoration only excepted; for the walls and gates being now burnt down of that rebellious city, which was always an enemy to the crown, his majeſty would never ſuffer them to be built up again, to be a bit in his mouth, and a bridle upon his neck; but would keep all open, that his troops might enter, whenever he thought it neceſſary for his ſervice, there being no other way to govern that rude multitude but by force."

Whatever had the ſhew of wit, though very improper in other reſpects, was never ſufficiently diſcountenanced by the king; and Mr. May's remarks, which excited the laughter of the company at the time, were afterwards repeated elſewhere very much to the king's diſſervice. The citizens finding themſelves ſpoken of by the courtiers with

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ſo much contempt, took the ſame liberty in talking of the debauchery and profaneneſs of the court; and as nothing was done here in private, ſo it was made more public by paſquinades and libels, which were as bold with reflections of the broadeſt nature upon the king himſelf, and upon thoſe in whoſe company he moſt delighted, as upon the meaneſt perſons. All reverence for the king and for government was loſt; and there was no man, who had the welfare of his country at heart, that did not lament the fatal conſequences which muſt ultimately attend ſuch ſcandalous exceſſes.

Deſign to ſuppreſs coffee-houſes.

The eaſy and natural method of ſilencing the railings of the people is to furniſh no juſt occaſion for them; and then they muſt die away of themſelves. Other reſtraints impoſed on the liberty of men's tongues betray the weakneſs, or the wickedneſs of government, and often ſerve to kindle the very flame, which they are meant to extinguiſh. But maxims of this kind would have conveyed ſo ſevere a cenſure on the manners of the court, that none of the king's ſincereſt well-wiſhers could venture to urge them with ſufficient force of reaſoning; for though his majeſty himſelf received ſuch hints without any ſhew of diſpleaſure, yet he was too eaſily perſuaded by others to regard them as the dictates of ill-nature and arrogance. The plan therefore, which was thought of at this time to check the licence of ſpeech, was to ſuppreſs coffee-houſes, where-

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where the boldeſt ſcandals were raiſed, and thence propagated all over the kingdom. The chancellor was commanded by the king to propoſe this matter at the council-board; which he did with ſome obſervations on the miſchief that muſt attend the impunity of ſuch places, where the fouleſt imputations were laid upon government, without the leaſt fear, as people generally believed that thoſe houſes had a charter of privilege for every body there to ſpeak what he liked. He therefore moved, that the attorney-general might be directed to prepare a proclamation for the ſuppreſſion of coffee-houſes; to which the board ſeemed inclined to aſſent, when Mr. Coventry, who had been heard a few days before to inveigh with great fierceneſs againſt the permiſſion of ſo much ſeditious prattle in thoſe houſes, ſtood up and ſaid, "that coffee was a commodity which yielded the king a good revenue, and therefore it would not be juſt to receive the duties, and inhibit the ſale of it." He added, "that coffee-houſes had been permitted even in Cromwell's time; and that the king's friends had uſed more liberty of ſpeech in thoſe places than they durſt do in any other." He concluded, "that he thought it better to leave ſuch houſes as they were, without running the hazard of their being more reſorted to than before, notwithſtanding his majeſty's command to the contrary." Upon theſe reaſons the king changed his mind, and declined any farther debate, which put the chancellor very

very much out of countenance, and gave Mr. Coventry great matter of triumph in having by his ſole arguments defeated the propoſal of ſo unpopular a meaſure *.

State of the public exigencies at the re-meeting of parliament.

According to the laſt prorogation, the parliament re-aſſembled on the twenty-firſt of September, when the king expreſſed his joy at meeting ſo many of them together again, and in that place, which was ſo likely to be involved in the late diſmal ruins. He told them, he was confident, they thanked him for having diſpenſed with their attendance in April: he deſired to put them to as little trouble as he could, and to as little coſt as he could: he wiſhed with all his heart, that he could bear the whole charge of the war himſelf, and that his ſubjects ſhould reap the whole benefit of it. His majeſty confeſſed that they had given him large ſupplies; yet he had been obliged to anticipate his revenue in order to ſet out the fleet laſt ſpring: they would conſider what was to be done next; and he would leave it to their wiſdom to find out the beſt expedients for carrying on the war, with as little burthen to the people as poſſible. He ſaid, "he would add no more than to put them in mind that their enemies were very inſolent; and if they were able to perſuade their miſerable people, whom they

* Yet we ſhall find that, in a few years after, this very plan was adopted; and that the moſt violent attempts were made to carry it into execution.

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miſled, that the contagion had ſo waſted the nation, and impoveriſhed the king, that he would not be able to ſet out any fleet; how would they be exalted with this late impoveriſhment of the city, and contemn all reaſonable conditions of peace?" His majeſty therefore could not doubt but that his parliament would provide accordingly.

The king had reaſon to ſpeak of his anticipations, and of his wants, which were at this time very preſſing. There had been no ſort of good management in any of the former ſupplies: the immenſe ſums ariſing from the capture of prizes, being diverted into a private channel, were all waſted in thoughtleſs extravagance, without the ſmalleſt benefit to the public ſervice; and in addition to theſe fatal effects of unthriftineſs and prodigality, the plague and the fire had, as it were, dried up the principal fountains, from which money and credit were accuſtomed to flow: the cuſtoms and the exciſe were bankrupt, not affording even enough to pay the intereſt of the money borrowed upon them; and as to chimney-money, the third next conſiderable branch of the revenue, it muſt ſuffer a conſiderable diminution, till the city could be rebuilt.

This woeful proſpect was in view at the meeting of parliament, who came not together with the better countenance, by ſeeing all hopes abroad with ſo

ſo ſad an aſpect, and all things at home appear ſo deſperate in many reſpects. Yet within a few days after the king had ſpoken to them, the houſe of commons being moſtly filled with his majeſty's ſervants, and the country gentlemen not being yet come, there was a faint vote procured, that they would give a ſupply to the king, proportionable to his wants; but without mentioning any ſum, or what way it was to be raiſed.

Reſolutions againſt the papiſts.

When the number of the members increaſed, the parliament appeared more chagrined than it had hitherto done; and though they made the ſame profeſſions of duty and affection to the king as before, they did not conceal the very bad opinion they had of the court, and of the continual riotings there. The truth was, that beſides thoſe juſt grounds of complaints, the court party themſelves were ſplit into factions, and ſuch of them as were jealous of the ſuperior intereſt and emoluments of the others, ſecretly inflamed the diſcontents of the independent members, in hopes thereby of enhancing their own ſervices, or bringing about ſome revolution more favourable to their private views. The firſt buſineſs of the commons was to appoint a committee with large powers to ſend for and examine all perſons, who could give any information concerning the cauſes of the late fire; and to ſhew their increaſed jealouſy of the papiſts, they appointed another committee to receive and certify information

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information of the growth of popery, and the insolence of Roman catholic priests and jesuits. They also passed some severe resolutions dictated by the same jealousy, in one of which only the lords concurred; and that was to request his majesty to command all priests and jesuits, except such of them as not being his natural born subjects were engaged to attend the queen consort, or queen mother, to quit the kingdom in thirty days, or to have the laws enforced against them *. His majesty issued a proclamation accordingly;

* The following are the five resolutions then passed by the commons, to the first of which only, as above observed, they obtained the concurrence of the lords:

"Resolved, I. That in order to the suppressing the insolency of the papists, his majesty be humbly desired forthwith to issue out his royal proclamation for the banishment of all priests and jesuits out of this kingdom, within thirty days to be therein limited, other than such, not being his natural-born subjects, who are obliged to attend on the queen consort, or the queen mother; and that if any priest or jesuit shall happen to be taken in England after the said days, that the laws shall be put in due execution against him:

"II. That in the same proclamation proper orders shall be given for putting the laws in execution against popish recusants, and such as are suspected of being so:

"III. That his majesty be humbly moved, that all popish recusants, and such as being suspected so to be shall refuse to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, being tendered to them, may be forthwith so disarmed, as to remove all apprehensions from the people of their possibilities to disturb the public peace of the nation; and that all officers, military and civil, and soldiers,

cordingly; but that did not silence other clamours, nor did it induce the commons to use any dispatch in the business of a supply. When any mention was made of the vote at first obtained, and that it was high time to render it effectual, in order to provide for the equipment of a fleet against the spring; it was answered with passion, "that the king's wants must be made first to appear, before any supply could be discoursed of: that there were already such vast sums of money given to his majesty, that there was none left in the country to carry on trade; and that all the specie having been brought to London, the farmers could not sell their corn, or their cattle, or their wool for half the value, so that they were deprived of the only advantageous means of raising wherewith to pay their taxes."

The opposition upon the subject of a supply was soon carried to a still greater length. The mem-

soldiers, as shall not, within twenty days, take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, may be disbanded and displaced:

"IV. That the commissaries of the musters be commanded and enjoined, upon penalty of losing their places, not to permit any officer or soldier to be mustered in the service and pay of his majesty, till he or they shall have taken the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the laws and usage of the church of England:

"V. That his majesty be humbly desired to issue out a new commission for tendering and administering the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the members of both houses."

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bers, who had not ſat in the parliament at Oxford, were exceedingly vexed that there had been ſo much given there, ſo ſoon after the two millions and a half had been granted. They ſaid, "that, if the king wanted again already, he muſt have been abominably cheated, which was fit to be examined: that the number of the ſhips, which had been ſet out by the king in ſeveral fleets, ſince the beginning of this war, was no ſecret; and that there were men enough well acquainted with the charge of fitting out, manning, and victualling ſhips, who were convinced, after the fulleſt eſtimate of all poſſible expences, that, if his majeſty had been honeſtly dealt with, there muſt ſtill remain a very great proportion of money to carry on the war, without need of impoſing more on the people, till they ſhould be better able to bear it: that it was therefore abſolutely neceſſary that all thoſe through whoſe hands the money had paſſed, ſhould firſt give an exact account of what they had received, and what, or how they had diſburſed it; and when that ſhould appear, it would be ſeaſonable to demand an addition of ſupply, which would be chearfully granted." Having ſtated thoſe things with unanſwerable force, the ſame perſons propoſed, that, for the better expedition of ſuch an inquiry, a bill ſhould be forthwith prepared to be paſſed into an act, for appointing ſuch commiſſioners as the houſes ſhould think fit, to examine all the accounts of thoſe who had received, or iſ-

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ſued out any monies for this war; and where any perſons were found guilty of a breach of truſt, that they ſhould be liable to ſuch puniſhment as the parliament ſhould think proper. This propoſal found ſuch a concurrence in the houſe, that none even of thoſe who were moſt averſe to ſuch an inquiry, ventured to oppoſe it; and it is alſo certain, that the overture itſelf had been ſecretly contrived and ſet on by ſome of the court-party, who ſeemed not to like it, but acquieſced, under a pretence of their thinking it to little purpoſe to endeavour to divert it; which is an artifice not unuſual in courts or parliament. The motion was therefore agreed to, and a committee named to prepare ſuch a bill accordingly.

Alarm excited at court by a bill for the appointment of commiſſioners of accounts.

The perſons, who were principally aimed at in the propoſed inquiry, were ſir George Carteret, the treaſurer of the navy, who had many enemies, not only from the opinion that his place was too lucrative, but ſtill more from the ill offices ſir William Coventry was always ready to do him; and the lord Aſhley, who was treaſurer of all the money raiſed upon prizes, which could not but be very conſiderable. The former had already paſt his account in the exchequer for two years, and was prepared to make up another year's account; but what method commiſſioners by act of parliament would put it into, he could neither imagine, nor be well ſatisfied with. The other, lord Aſhley, had yet

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more reaſon to be troubled, for he was by his commiſſion exempted from giving any account but to the king himſelf, which exemption was the only reaſon that made him ſolicitous for the office; and he well knew that there were great ſums iſſued, which could not be put into any public account, ſo that his perplexity was very great in ſeveral reſpects. Both of them, therefore, applied to the king for his protection in this matter.

His majeſty was not leſs troubled than either of the treaſurers: he knew they had both iſſued out many ſums upon his warrants, which he would not ſuffer to be produced. Hereupon he called the ſelect committee of his privy council, and complained of this unuſual way of proceeding in the houſe of commons, which, he ſaid, would terrify all men from ſerving him in any receipts, as they would no longer know, either what method to purſue for the paſſing of their accounts, or what puniſhment they might be liable to incur: he hoped ſuch a bill would never find a conſent in the houſe of commons; or if it did, that the lords would reject it; but declared, that in caſe it ſhould paſs both, and be brought to him, he was reſolved never to give it his royal aſſent *. The committee

* Thus, in order to prevent any diſcovery of the immenſe ſums, which Charles had ſquandered away in the moſt diſgraceful extravagance, the plunderers of the nation were to be ſheltered by the throne itſelf from public juſtice.

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ſeemed to concur with his majeſty, that he ought not to conſent to the propoſed bill; however, that the beſt care ſhould be uſed to ſtop it in its progreſs through the houſes, and for that purpoſe, to prepare the members by giving them notice of his pleaſure.

Chancellor's fatal indiſcretion.

In this conference the chancellor was guilty of the greateſt and moſt fatal indiſcretion, though from very diſintereſted motives. He had nothing to fear from an examination of the public accounts. On the contrary, it was likely to involve his worſt enemies in diſgrace. But from a recollection of the ſteps, by which former parliaments had proceeded to an open rupture with the crown, he was alarmed at the appearance of any new powers aſſumed by the commons; and dreading the return of the old troubles, he did not ſufficiently conſider, that extraordinary evils not only admitted of, but required extraordinary remedies, as in the propoſed inſtance was undoubtedly the caſe. Through ſuch an unfortunate miſtake, he was prompted to expreſs himſelf in the committee with unguarded warmth. He owned, "that the king could not be too indulgent in the defence of the privileges of parliament, which he hoped his majeſty would never violate; but he deſired him to be equally ſolicitous to prevent the exceſſes in parliament, and not to ſuffer them to extend their juriſdiction to caſes they had nothing to do with." He ſaid, "that

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to reſtrain them within their proper bounds and limits was as neceſſary as to preſerve them from being invaded: that the bill for a commiſſion of inquiry into the public expenditure was ſuch a new encroachment as had no bottom; and that the ſcars were yet too freſh and green of thoſe wounds, which had been inflicted upon the kingdom, from ſuch uſurpation." He therefore conjured the king not to depart from the reſolution he had taken; and promiſed that if the bill ſhould be brought up to the houſe of peers, he would not fail in doing his duty, and ſpeaking freely his opinion againſt ſuch innovations, how many ſoever it might offend. Theſe remarks, which the chancellor made with ſo little reſerve, were ſoon after communicated to thoſe, who did not fail to turn them to his diſadvantage.

Diſpute occaſioned by a clauſe in the Poll-bill.

In the mean time the utmoſt efforts were uſed to prevent any farther notice of the bill in either houſe. A ſufficient majority was ſecured in the lords for rejecting it; but it was not ſo eaſy to perſuade the commons to drop it. Accounts of the money expended in the ſervice of the war were laid before them, but did not prove ſatisfactory. Various other contrivances were uſed to divert them from their purpoſe; and when at length, with unconquerable obſtinacy, they added to the Poll-bill, by which a part of the ſupplies was to be provided for, a clauſe authorizing themſelves to appoint four commiſſioners

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commiſſioners to audit the accounts of all monies received ſince the beginning of the war, including what aroſe from prizes, the only expedient for evading it in the leaſt offenſive manner was to engage the lords to addreſs his majeſty to iſſue out a commiſſion, appointing twelve commoners and ſix lords to examine the public accounts. The commons, however, reſented this very warmly: they were not amuſed with the idea, that twelve of their own body would be of the commiſſion, as they well knew what was to be expected from any perſons of the king's appointment: they threatened the chancellor with an impeachment for adviſing ſuch a meaſure, and putting the great ſeal to it; and they reſolved, That the lords going in petition to the king for a commiſſion for taking the public accounts, whilſt there was a bill ſent up from their houſe for taking them another way, was unparliamentary, and of dangerous conſequence; and that, according to the right and ſettled courſe of parliaments upon bills, neither one bill, nor any part thereof is to be communicated to his majeſty by either houſe, until the whole be agreed unto by both. But this was not the only miſunderſtanding and difference which diſtracted the proceedings of the two houſes during the preſent ſeſſion, and proved very injurious to the public ſervice.

Duke of Buckingham's cabal.

There was a private correſpondence by this time begun between ſome diſcontented members of the

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houſe of peers, with the duke of Buckingham at their head; and ſome members of the houſe of commons, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their oppoſition to the court intereſt, and among whom Mr. Seymour, ſir Richard Temple, Mr. Ganoway, and ſir Robert Howard took the lead. The duke was uncommonly aſſiduous in cultivating the friendſhip of theſe bold ſpeakers: he invited them to his table; pretended to have a great eſteem of their parts; aſked counſel of them; lamented the king's neglecting his buſineſs, and committing it to other people, who were not fit for it; and then gave them a lively deſcription of all the licentiouſneſs and debauchery of the court, which he was the better able to do, having been himſelf a frequent eye and ear-witneſs of it. He had lately a violent quarrel with lady Caſtlemaine, and was ſo much in the king's diſpleaſure, that he forbore going to the court, and revenged himſelf upon it by all the merry tales he could tell of what was done there. It cannot be imagined, conſidering his looſe and diſſipated life, what influence he had in both houſes, that is, how many in both would follow his advice, and concur in what he propoſed. His quality and condeſcenſion, the pleaſantneſs of his humour and converſation, the extravagance and ſharpneſs of his wit unreſtrained by any religion or modeſty, drew perſons of all tempers and talents to like his company. Men of ſobriety and virtue were led to believe that his levities would be

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be wrought off by age, and that there would be enough of good left to become a great man, and to make him uſeful to his country, for which he pretended to have a wonderful affection, proteſting that all his quarrel with the court proceeded from their declared malignity againſt the liberty of the ſubject, and their deſire that the king ſhould govern by the example of France. He even kept a good correſpondence with the principal perſons among the diſſenters, and profeſſed a deſire that liberty of conſcience might be granted to all. The king had often heard of his behaviour, and of the freedom he took in ſpeaking of the court, at which though his majeſty felt much indignation, yet he never ſuppoſed that the duke could long retain either the good opinion of the people, as they muſt ſoon diſcover his want of principle; or the friendſhip of ſerious men, whom he could not help abuſing and making ridiculous, as ſoon as he was out of their company; or laſtly, an intereſt in parliament, as he was thought incapable of that cloſe purſuit of any deſign, which buſineſs and political intrigue required. But the duke had ſoon an opportunity of ſhewing the unexpected ſtrength of his faction in both houſes.

Violent debates on the bill againſt the importation of Iriſh cattle.

The place, which the duke of Ormond held in the king's eſteem, had long been an object of jealouſy to many of the Engliſh nobility, but was particularly irritating to the duke of Buckingham, who

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who looked upon the other as his rival, and who was very willing to undertake the profecution of any complaint againſt him. The disjointed ſtate of Ireland, where the duke of Ormond was lord lieutenant, furniſhed Buckingham with many opportunities of gratifying his perſonal reſentment; but he found in the prejudices of the Engliſh houſe of commons a fuller ſcope for extending his revenge from the lord lieutenant to the whole country, over which he preſided.

There had been for two or three years a murmur, which continually increaſed with other juſter cauſes of complaint, that, in conſequence of the great importations of Iriſh cattle, which were bred there for nothing, and conveyed here for very little, the breeding of cattle in this kingdom was totally given over, whereby the lands would yield no rent proportionably to what they had done, which, it was pretended, was a principal cauſe of the want of money in the country. Though it was well known that in many Engliſh counties the land was too good to be applied to the purpoſes of breeding, and that the great traffic of the farmers and graziers in thoſe counties, and the chief means by which they were enabled to pay their rent, conſiſted in buying lean cattle and making them fat, yet a clauſe againſt the importing of foreign cattle was inſerted in the act for the encouragement of trade. But the enemies of the duke of Ormond

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and of Ireland, joined with ſome great monopolizing projectors in this country, endeavoured, during the ſhort ſeſſion at Oxford, to render the prohibition more pointed againſt the ſiſter kingdom, by introducing into the lower houſe a bill againſt the importing of beef, pork, and bacon from Ireland, with a proviſo, according to which no reſtraint was to be impoſed upon bringing either from Scotland. This bill was carried very rapidly through the commons; but upon an intimation given to the lords of its being diſagreeable to the king, it was then thrown out, almoſt without any debate.

The failure of the attempt at Oxford did not diſcourage the duke of Buckingham's cabal from renewing it now with greater confidence, heat, and obſtinacy. The juncture was peculiarly favourable to their wiſhes. Beſides the prevalence of national prejudices and jealouſy, and the increaſed ſtrength of the faction, there was at this time ſuch an alarm excited by the prodigious fall of rents, that many well-meaning members of both houſes were too eaſily impoſed upon by a bold aſſertion, that this grievance aroſe wholly from ſuffering the produce of our own land to be underſold at our own markets by Iriſh importations. The bill was therefore brought forward in the commons, with a new clauſe extending the prohibition to fiſh taken by foreigners; and was inſiſted on as a matter of ſuch importance

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importance and immediate neceſſity, that there could be no debate begun with reference to the giving money to the king, till this bill were firſt paſt.

In the mean time, the council of Ireland, who had previous intimation of what was intended here, not only wrote to the king himſelf, but ſent alſo a long letter to the privy-council, in which they gave a ſtrong picture of the diſtreſſed and diſtracted ſtate of that kingdom. They ſaid, "that there were more than one hundred thouſand perſons, who had nothing elſe to live upon but their droves of cattle, out of which they ſent twice a year as many as they could ſpare into England, and had returns in ſuch goods and merchandize as they wanted, for they received no ſpecie in that traffic: that if this liberty of trade, which they had enjoyed in all ages, ſhould be taken from them, the king's army could not be ſupported, nor the government maintained, but the kingdom muſt be unavoidably ruined; and that probably a new rebellion, in ſo general a diſcontent as this reſtraint would adminiſter, might be again entered into." They concluded their farther repreſentations on this head with deſiring, "that a few years longer might at leaſt be allowed to that traffic, to the end that ſome other huſbandry might be introduced into the kingdom, by which the people might live, and which government would endeavour to plant with all poſſible diligence and encouragement."

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The king himſelf was ſo much moved with theſe letters, that he declared he could neither in juſtice nor in conſcience conſent to ſuch a bill, which he therefore deſired might be put a ſtop to, ſo as not to be preſented to him, for if it were, he muſt poſitively reject it. The letters did not make the ſame impreſſion on all the lords of the council: a few were convinced of the injuſtice and partiality of the bill, and moſt heartily concurred with the king in opinion; but much the greater number were of different ſentiments. Some inſiſted that in a point ſo evidently, as they ſaid, for the advantage of England, the inconvenience of Ireland ought not to be put into the ſcale. Others, though they did not ſpeak out, thought in truth, that the king was too much inclined to favour the Iriſh; and in that reſpect were well content that this bill ſhould be a mortification to them. There were alſo not a few, who in dark expreſſions (which grew clearer, when the matter came into the houſe of lords) inſinuated that the eſtates in Ireland were more valuable than in England; and that ſome noblemen of that kingdom lived in a higher garb, and made greater expences than the noblemen in England were able to do, which had not been in former times.

Although his majeſty had expreſſed a very earneſt deſire that all the intereſt of the court might be exerted to defeat the bill in the houſe of commons, yet he was afterwards perſuaded by ſir William Coventry

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ventry to let even his own ſervants vote as they pleaſed on that queſtion. He perſuaded the king that the commons had taken the Iriſh bill ſo much to heart, that they would never enter upon the debate of money, till that had paſſed the houſe and was ſent to the lords, who, no doubt, upon the knowledge of his majeſty's mind and reſolution would eaſily throw it out. He alſo pretended, that if his majeſty's ſervants continued obſtinate in oppoſing it below, they would but provoke and anger the houſe, and render themſelves uſeleſs to other parts of his majeſty's more important buſineſs; whereas if they did now gratify the houſe by concurring with them in this matter, they ſhould make themſelves acceptable, have credit enough to divert the bill for an extraordinary commiſſion to examine the public accounts, and preſently diſpoſe every body to enter upon the matter of ſupply. Theſe laſt conſiderations, urged by a perſon, in whoſe knowledge of the temper of the houſe the king had great confidence, made his majeſty tell ſuch members as came to receive his orders, that they might follow the dictates of their own judgment. Upon this the bill had a conſiderable majority in the commons *, and was carried up to the peers by all the members in great triumph, and as in caſes they much delight in.

* When the houſe divided on the queſtion, there were one hundred and ſixty-five for the bill, and one hundred and four againſt it.

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The houſe of peers was no ſooner poſſeſſed of the bill, than it was read, and a very keen reſolution appeared in many to uſe the utmoſt diſpatch in paſſing it, though, beſides the exceptions juſtly entertained againſt the very principle of the bill, it contained many clauſes, which ſome thought highly derogatory to the king's honour and prerogative. The duke of Buckingham and lord Aſhley were the moſt violent ſupporters of it; and the latter, among other arguments, ſaid, that if this bill did not paſs, all the rents in Ireland would riſe to a vaſt proportion, and thoſe in England fall as much, ſo that in a year or two the duke of Ormond would have a greater revenue than the earl of Northumberland. It can hardly be imagined what impreſſion this made, as a thing not to be endured; whereas the duke's hereditary eſtate in Ireland was four times as large as that of the earl in this country, and the revenue of it, before the troubles, was not inferior to the other. But nothing was more manifeſt, than that the warmth, with which it was urged by many lords, proceeded from the envy they had of the duke's ſtation in one kingdom, and of his fortune in the other. The whole debate was very unparliamentary, and there being, among thoſe who advanced the bill, fewer ſpeakers than there were of thoſe who oppoſed it, thoſe few took upon them to ſpeak oftener than they ought to do, and reply to every man who declared himſelf to be of another opinion; and when they were put in mind

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mind of the rule of the houſe, that no man ſhould ſpeak above once upon the ſame queſtion, they called preſently to have the houſe reſolved into a committee, which any ſingle member may require, and then every man may ſpeak as often as he pleaſed. Thus the time was waſted in unprofitable debate, without making the leaſt progreſs.

There was not leſs irregularity in the conduct of the commons, who ſent frequent meſſages to preſs the diſpatch of the bill, when they knew well the debates of every day; and it was often urged as an argument, that the houſe of commons was the fitteſt judge of the neceſſities and grievances of the people, and that as they had paſſed the bill, the lords ought to conform to their opinion. In fine, there grew ſo great a licence of words in this debate, and ſo many perſonal reflections, that every day ſome quarrels aroſe to the great ſcandal of a court that was the ſupreme judicatory of the kingdom.

Curious circumſtances of a challenge.

The duke of Buckingham, who aſſumed a liberty of ſpeaking when and what he would, in a dialect unuſual and ungrave, his ſimiles and other expreſſions giving occaſion of much mirth and laughter, one day ſaid in the debate, "that whoever was againſt the bill, had either an Iriſh intereſt, or an Iriſh underſtanding." Lord Oſſory, the duke of Ormond's eldeſt ſon, was very much offended at

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ſo groſs a reflection; but having himſelf very narrowly eſcaped the cenſure of the houſe lately, for reproaching lord Aſhley with having been a counſellor to Cromwell, he would not truſt himſelf with giving a preſent anſwer. An opportunity ſoon offered of his meeting the duke, when he inſiſted upon ſatisfaction; and a well known ſpot in Chelſea fields was choſen to decide the matter within an hour. But the duke thought proper to miſtake the place, and croſſing the water, went to a field over againſt Chelſea, and ſtaid there, till ſome gentlemen came to prevent a duel which he never intended to fight. Finding that lord Oſſory was not in cuſtody that night, and being ſure that he would ſoon hear from him again, he took a ſtrange reſolution, and next morning as ſoon as the houſe ſat, lord Oſſory being likewiſe preſent, related the whole affair, though with great confuſion between aggravating the preſumption of lord Oſſory, and making the offence as heinous as the violating all the privileges of parliament could amount unto, and magnifying his own courage and readineſs to fight upon any opportunity, when it was clear enough that he had declined it by a groſs ſhift.

Lord Oſſory, greatly troubled that the conteſt was likely to be only in that place, did not deny the fact; but endeavoured to exculpate himſelf by aſſerting that, at the time he called the duke to account, when his grace inſiſted much on the pri-

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vilege of parliament, to decline giving him any ſatisfaction, he had expreſſly declared to his grace, that he did not queſtion him for any words ſpoken in that houſe, but for abuſive language uſed elſewhere, and for affronts which he had at other times choſen to bear, rather than diſturb the company. They were both ordered to withdraw to different rooms near the houſe; and the duke's partizans, who were very numerous, inſiſted loudly on the magnitude of the offence, which concerned the honour and ſafety of the higheſt tribunal in the kingdom, and the liberty and ſecurity of every one of its members. They ſaid, and indeed with great truth, "that if any lord by his licentious and offenſive language exceeded the modeſt limits preſcribed in debate, the houſe had the power and the practice to reſtrain, and reprehend, or impriſon the perſon, according to the nature of the offence, and that no other remedy and examination could be applied to it by the king himſelf; but if every private man were allowed to take exception againſt any words, which the houſe found no fault with, and to require others to juſtify with their ſword, all that they ſaid in diſcharge of their conſcience, and for the good of their country, there would be an end to the privilege of parliament." Then applying theſe indiſputable maxims to the preſent caſe, they concluded, "that too great a puniſhment could not be inflicted upon the notorious and monſtrous offence of lord Oſſory, which concerned

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every member of the houſe as much as it did the duke of Buckingham, who had behaved himſelf as well as the ill cuſtom and iniquity of the age would admit, and had given no offence to the houſe, but had, on the contrary, always paid it the utmoſt reſpect and reverence.

It is not eaſy to ſay how far this laſt concluſion might have prevailed, had not ſome of the lords, who were known not to be the duke's friends, affected to agree to it, and even put on the ſhew of earneſtneſs that his grace might receive no puniſhment, "becauſe," they ſaid, "he had committed no fault, for it was very evident he never intended to fight; and had, when no other tergiverſation would ſerve his turn, prudently miſtaken the place that was appointed by himſelf." This was urged with ſo much irony, joined to ſome witty remarks on certain expreſſions uſed by the duke himſelf, that his better friends thought it would be more for his honour to undergo the cenſure of the houſe, than the diſgrace of ſuch a vindication; and ſo both the duke and his challenger were ſent to the Tower.

Farther acts of indecency and outrage.

Thoſe two lords had no ſooner undergone the ſentence, and were ſet at liberty, their mutual diſpleaſure being ſuppreſſed, or rather ſilenced by the king's command, than another more untoward outrage happened, that continued the like diſturb-

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ance. During the debate on this bill, there was a conference appointed with the houſe of commons, in which the duke of Buckingham was one of the managers. As they were ſitting in the Painted Chamber, which is ſeldom done in good order, it happened that the marquis of Dorcheſter took his place next to the duke. There had been for ſome time no good correſpondence between them; and one of them now changing his poſture for his own eaſe, which made the ſituation of the other more uneaſy, they firſt began with juſtling, and afterwards fell to direct blows, in which the marquis, who was the lower of the two in ſtature, loſt his perriwig. The miſdemeanor, greater than had ever happened in that place, could not be concealed, but was reported to the houſe, as ſoon as the conference was ended. Both parties were heard, and both confeſſed enough to make them undergo the cenſure of the houſe. They were ſent to the Tower, from whence, after a few days, they were releaſed together, and ſuch a reconciliation made, as after ſuch encounters is uſual, where either party thinks himſelf before-hand with the other; as the marquis had much of the duke's hair in his hands, to make amends for the other's pulling off his perriwig.

When things were thus far quieted, the bill was again entered upon, with no leſs paſſion, for the ſtock that had been waſted. Every argument againſt the principle of the bill, however juſt and forcible,

forcible, made but little impreſſion. It was in vain to ſay, that it was as partial and unjuſt to deprive Ireland of its only traffic, on the pretence of its being attended with ſome imaginary grievance here, as it would be to take away the trade from any one county in England, merely becauſe it might be thought to produce ſome inconvenience to another. Theſe and many other remarks on the injury ſo impolitic a bill muſt be attended with to England itſelf *, had no other effect than that of leaving out a very partial proviſo in favour of Scotland, to which the houſe of commons likewiſe conſented, though not without much oppoſition.

After this almoſt uſeleſs diſcuſſion of the principle of the bill, the debate fell upon ſome clauſes, one of which in particular ſtruck at the king's authority, by making his licence or warrant, to permit at any time the importation of Iriſh cattle, of no effect,

* See the note on this ſubject at the bottom of page 47; to which it may be added, that though the rent of lands in England ſeemed to riſe in conſequence of this bill, the price of proviſions and the price of labour roſe in a much greater proportion; and the Iriſh being driven by the moſt cruel neceſſity to new reſources, ſet themſelves to eſtabliſh manufactures, and carried their produce to other countries, to the very great injury of Engliſh commerce. Thus by an act of abſurd oppreſſion, which took its riſe from perſonal animoſities, from prejudice, and ignorance, England was deprived of the bleſſings of a plentiful market, and Ireland was impelled to cultivate an unnatural and clandeſtine intercourſe with the enemies of her ſiſter kingdom.

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but liable to be controuled by a conſtable. This clauſe was warmly oppoſed by ſome of the royal party as not only derogatory to the king's juſt prerogative, but likely to be attended with very fatal effects, if, in caſe of a murrain, or any diſeaſe amongſt our own cattle, the king ſhould not have power to ſuſpend the prohibition, and thereby to provide for the ſupply of his ſubjects, and prevent a common dearth. There was another objection to thoſe reſtraints on any importation whatever of Iriſh cattle, as by a former act of parliament Ireland was every year to ſupply three thouſand beeves, to be delivered at Cheſter and another Engliſh port for the proviſion of the king's houſe. But it was ſaid in reply, that the end of the bill would be wholly eluded by ſuch exceptions, or by permitting the king to diſpenſe at pleaſure with the violation of it; for that his inclinations were well known, and therefore the effect of them, and the importunity of his courtiers muſt be provided againſt. In this diſcourſe an extraordinary liberty of language was uſed, which reflected ſo ſtrongly on the king's honour, and indeed upon his whole council and court, that all who poſſeſſed any zeal or affection for his majeſty could not avoid reſenting it, and inſiſting that thoſe clauſes ſhould be amended in ſome places, and totally left out in others. Theſe alterations were made in ſpite of the ſturdy efforts of a very powerful oppoſition; and the bill ſo amended was returned to the commons.

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If the commons expreſſed great diſſatisfaction at the delay of the bill, it may be eaſily judged how inflamed they were at ſo many amendments: they rejected them all; and voted, that they would adhere to their own bill, without departing from a word of it, except with reference to Scotland, from which, as I before remarked, they receded, though not unanimouſly. Many conferences took place between both houſes, in which the commons maintained their adherence with wonderful obſtinacy; and the managers for them not only repeated the arguments and expreſſions which had been uſed in the houſe of peers againſt leaving any power in the king to diſpenſe, but added ſeveral obſervations of their own, reflecting ſtill worſe upon his majeſty's honour, and yet concluded as if they could ſay more, if they were provoked; upon which every man might make what gloſſes he pleaſed, and the king himſelf was left to his own imaginations.

Charitable donation of 30,000 Iriſh beeves rejected.

There need be no other inſtance given of the incredible paſſion, that was ſhewn in ſupporting this bill, than a particular which related to the city of London. Upon the news of the great fire, and of the devaſtation it made here, the ſeveral provinces of Ireland having digeſted among themſelves a plan of relief for the moſt diſtreſſed ſufferers, preſented a declaration to the lord lieutenant and council, that they had ſo tender a ſenſe of that calamity, that if they were able to raiſe money to

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adminiſter ſome aſſiſtance to the city, they would willingly offer it; but that not being in their power, they were deſirous of giving at leaſt ſome teſtimony of their good will, and had agreed to ſend to the lord mayor and city of London, to be diſpoſed of by them to ſuch particular uſes as ſhould be thought moſt convenient, thirty thouſand beeves, which ſhould be delivered within ſuch a time, and at ſuch ports as were named, to any ſuch perſons as ſhould be appointed to receive them. The lord lieutenant and council, at their requeſt, ſent notice of this offer to the king and likewiſe to the city of London; upon which, as the bill to prohibit the importation of Iriſh cattle was then depending in the houſe of lords, a petition was preſented to them by the lord mayor and aldermen, humbly requeſting that a proviſo might be inſerted, that nothing contained in that bill ſhould hinder the city of London from enjoying the charitable donative of thirty thouſand cattle, but be allowed to import the ſame.

It can hardly be believed with what paſſion and indignation this petition was received by the houſe. The promoters of the bill broke out into violent invectives againſt the city for its preſumption, in interpoſing its own particular intereſt, to obſtruct the public affairs of the kingdom: they made very ſevere reflections upon the lord lieutenant and council of Ireland for countenancing ſuch an addreſs,

dreſs, and becoming inſtruments to promote and advance it: they would not allow it to be an offering of charity, but a cheat and a cozenage, to elude an act of parliament, which could not but be heard of in Ireland, and even preſumed to be paſſed by this time; which if it had been, and ſuch a diſpenſing power left in the king, as was propoſed, it would now, they ſaid, be ſeen how it would have been applied; for they could not doubt but people enough would have adviſed the king to gratify the city of London with a licence for importation; and that licence, they were alſo ſure, could not, or would not have been ſo warily drawn, but that by means of it, inſtead of thirty thouſand, there would be three hundred thouſand imported into England: this, they aſſerted, was the great charity aimed at; and therefore moved, that the petition and the proviſo might be both rejected. But the other party, who looked upon the offer made by the Iriſh as a very ſeaſonable intention of charity, prevailed to have the proviſo inſerted, and tranſmitted with their approbation to the lower houſe.

The relief, however, of diſtreſſed citizens could not induce the commons to deviate in the ſmalleſt degree from their original purpoſe. The proviſo for importing the generous gift of the Iriſh met with no better fate than any of the other amendments; and though, at a conference between the two

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two houſes, in order to remove the objection that more cattle might be imported under cover of the others, it was propoſed that the beeves ſhould be killed in Ireland, and powdered there, and ſent over in barrels or caſks; yet the commons found cozenage in that alſo, and were as angry with the cattle when they were dead, as when they were alive; ſo that no expedient could alter or remove their obſtinacy. In ſhort, nothing was got by the conferences but the diſcovery of new jealouſies of the king and the court, and new inſinuations of the diſcontents and murmurs in the country becauſe the bill was ſo long obſtructed.

All this being repreſented to the king with the moſt ghaſtly aſpects towards what effects it might produce, his majeſty in the end was prevailed upon, notwithſtanding very earneſt advice to the contrary*, not only to be willing to give his aſſent, when it ſhould be offered him, but to ſolicit particularly many of the lords to depart from their own

* The chancellor and a few of his party privately adviſed the king at this time to diſſolve the parliament, to which his majeſty ſeemed at firſt inclined; but was diſſuaded from it by Mr. William Coventry, who ſaid, that the preſent ill temper of the commons would vaniſh, upon ſome ſmall condeſcenſions; whereas, if his majeſty ſhould run the riſk of a general election, a great many preſbyterians might be returned, and moſt of his menial ſervants and their relations, of whom he had above a hundred now in the houſe at his diſpoſal, would very probably be thrown out.

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fenſe, and conform to what he thought convenient to his ſervice. This was matter of great triumph to the commons, and to thoſe members of the houſe of lords, with whom they caballed *.

Lord Mordaunt's impeachment.

There were many other affairs of a more private nature, which at this time adminiſtered farther occaſion of faction and diſſention in the two houſes, and greatly retarded and perplexed all public buſineſs. The commons having preferred articles of impeachment againſt lord Mordaunt, the conſtable of Windſor Caſtle, took offence, that the accuſed was ſuffered to remain within the bar of the lords, while the articles of his impeachment were reading; and demanded, that he ſhould be obliged to quit his ſeat. The peers, whom his majeſty, from particular obligations to that lord, had previouſly diſpoſed to favour him as much as poſſible, rejected the demand of the commons, and even refuſed to confer with them on the ſubject, as it was a point

* Had the commons defended their civil and religious rights with half the firmneſs which they manifeſted in puſhing on the Iriſh bill, what applauſe would they not have merited! Inſtead of which, we cannot help feeling the juſteſt indignation, to ſee a ſet of corrupt and perfidious ſlaves, who had ſold the liberties, the property, in many inſtances the lives, and as far as they were able, the conſciences of their countrymen, diſcovering an invincible reſiſtance to the wiſhes of their pay-maſter and tyrant, in one of the very few purpoſes in which he ſeemed to conſult the general intereſt of his ſubjects.

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of judicature, which the others had no right to interfere in. This was adding new fuel to the flame, that already burned with too much violence. The diſpleaſure, which aroſe from the ſmalleſt conteſt, vented itſelf in matters of much greater moment; and produced paſſions and animoſities that were not quickly laid aſide, after the affair itſelf, which had excited them, was compoſed and ended.

The chancellor renders himſelf very obnoxious to the commons.

In moſt of the debates on any queſtion of privilege, but eſpecially in the two great ſtruggles upon the Iriſh bill, and the bill for examining the public accounts, the chancellor had the misfortune to loſe much credit in the houſe of commons. Whenever he thought they over-ſtepped the proper limits, he was too apt to ſpeak of them with leſs reverence than they expected. He often reminded the lords of the miſchiefs which, he ſaid, had their original from the liberties aſſumed by the houſe of commons, and the compliance to which the peers had deſcended in the late times, till after multiplied affronts the whole authority was wreſted out of their hands, and the door of their houſe was ſhut up with a padlock. Language of this kind, though it flowed from his own conviction, gave as much offence to ſome of the lords preſent, as it could do to any of the commons. The truth is, he had ſeen and ſuffered ſo much during the troubles, and his mind was ſo terribly haunted with the ſpectre of rebellion, that he took the alarm at the ſmalleſt encroachment

croachment, and believed that the juſt prerogatives of the crown could not be ſecured, but by carefully watching and reſtraining all the exceſſes, which were affected by either houſe, under the name of privileges. His enemies were glad to hear him at any time ſpeak againſt the proceedings of the commons, as they knew it would be warmly reſented in that houſe; and many of his friends informed him how ill it was taken, and how much every thing he ſaid was aggravated in the reports made of it; and therefore deſired him to uſe leſs fervour in theſe argumentations. But in things of that kind he was uncounſelable; and though he received the ſtrongeſt intimations, that a ſtorm would be ſhortly raiſed to ſhake him, yet he did not dread it, never ſuſpecting, till it actually burſt upon him, that it could proceed from that quarter, whence alone it was capable of doing him injury.

Though the commons knew well that the Iriſh bill could never have paſſed the upper houſe but by the king's powerful interpoſition, they remained ſtill jealous, or pretended to be ſo, that he would not give his aſſent, which till he ſhould do, they would admit no debate. As ſoon therefore as it was ready, his majeſty went to the houſe of peers, where having given his aſſent to that, and to another bill, he commanded the attendance of the commons, and told them, "that he had now paſſed their bills, and had been in hope to have had other bills ready to

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to have paſſed too. He could not," he ſaid, " forget that within few days after their coming together in September, both houſes had preſented to him their vote and declaration, that they would give him a ſupply proportionable to his occaſions; and the confidence of that had made him anticipate all the ſmall part of his revenue which was unanticipated, for the payment of the ſeamen; and his credit had gone farther than he had reaſon to think it would; but it was now at an end." He then obſerved, " that this was the firſt day he had heard of a ſupply, being the eighteenth of January, and what it would amount to God only knew*; and what time he had to make ſuch preparations as were neceſſary, they could well enough judge; and he muſt tell them, what diſcourſes ſoever were abroad, *he was not in any treaty*, but by the grace of God he would not give over himſelf and them, but would do what was in his power for defence of of both." He added, " that it was high time for

* The king means the Poll-bill, which was paſſed at this time; but of which the author of the Secret Hiſtory has taken no farther notice, after his remarks on the manner in which the clauſe for the appointment of commiſſioners to examine the public accounts was defeated by the petition of the lords. The obnoxious proviſo was afterwards ſtruck out by the commons; but they introduced in its ſtead a diſtinct bill nearly to the ſame purport as the clauſe, which had been ſo unconſtitutionally defeated. But their new bill was delayed in the upper houſe till the prorogation of parliament, and ſo died away without any farther diſcuſſion.

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them to make good their promiſe, and it was high time for them to be in the country, as well for the raiſing of money, as that the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants might watch thoſe ſeditious ſpirits, which were at work to diſturb the public peace: he was therefore reſolved to put an end to that ſeſſion on the next Monday ſevennight, before which time he deſired that all things might be made ready, which he was to diſpatch." His majeſty concluded with ſaying "he was not willing to complain that they had dealt unkindly with him in a bill he had then paſſed, in which they had manifeſted a greater diſtruſt of him than he had deſerved: he did not pretend to be without infirmities, *but he had* NEVER BROKEN HIS WORD *to them; and, if he did not flatter himſelf, the nation had never leſs cauſe to complain of* GRIEVANCES, *or the* LEAST INJUSTICE, *or* OPPRESSION, *than it had in theſe ſeven years, ſince it had pleaſed God to reſtore him to them* *."

The bill of ſupply paſſed at length.

This little quickneſs in the king had the effect which he intended; for though ſome of the refractory party endeavoured to diſſuade the commons from proceeding on the ſupply, till the bill for taking the public accounts, which they had ſent

* If this was not ſelf-flattery, it was the *ne plus ultra* of mendacious effrontery, as Charles muſt have been well convinced, that not only his hearers, but the whole nation knew the reverſe of every one of his aſſertions to be a lamentable truth.

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up to the lords, ſhould be debated there, and paſſed, yet the houſe urged by the ſhortneſs of the time allowed them, and deſirous of leaving ſome reliſh of their former duty and compliance, made ſuch progreſs in the bill for ſupply, that it was ſent up to the lords, and carried through the neceſſary ſtages there againſt the day preſcribed *.

On the eighth of February the king came to the parliament, and the ſpeaker of the commons preſenting to him the bill of ſupply, he gave his aſſent to it †, and thanked them for it, with an aſſurance, that the money ſhould be laid out for the end it was given; but at the ſame time expreſſed his hope, that he ſhould live to have bills of this nature in the old ſtyle, with fewer proviſos. He then took notice that the bill of accounts was not offered to him; but promiſed to iſſue out his own commiſſion for that purpoſe. Though the ſeaſon

* The ſupply granted upon this occaſion for the ſervice of the year was eighteen hundred thouſand pounds, which was to be raiſed by the Poll-bill, and by the continuance of the former monthly aſſeſſments.

† The royal aſſent was given at the ſame time to ſome other acts, the chief of which related to the re-building of the city of London. One was an act to lay twelve pence upon every chaldron, and twelve pence upon every ton of coals that ſhould be brought into the port of London for ten years, the better to enable the lord mayor and aldermen to recompenſe thoſe perſons, whoſe grounds ſhould be taken from them, in order to enlarge the ſtreets.

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was very far ſpent, he ſaid, he would make all the preparations he could, but would not reject any good overtures for an honourable peace. Then exhorting them to uſe their influence in their reſpective counties to reconcile the people to neceſſary burthens, and to remove the falſe imaginations infuſed into their hearts by the malice of ill men, he prorogued the parliament to the tenth of October.

Impoſſibility of providing a fleet to face the enemy.

Now the king had much more to do than he had time or tools to diſpatch. After giving orders to the attorney and ſolicitor-general to prepare a commiſſion for examining the public accounts, in ſo plauſible a manner as might prevent the future clamour of parliament, and yet ſcreen the treaſurer of the prize-money from any particular inquiry, he began to turn his thoughts to the poſture of affairs with reſpect to the enemy. The unthrifty expenditure of all the former ſupplies, the miſapplication and waſte of the money ariſing from prizes, the anticipation of every branch of the revenue, the loſs of credit from breach of faith to the bankers, the arrears due to all the workmen in the dock-yards, who were near a mutiny, the inſufficiency of the late grant to ſupply the numberleſs wants ariſing from paſt miſmanagement, and the advanced ſtate of the ſeaſon, all concurred to render it impoſſible to provide a fleet ready to encounter with the potent enemies in the ſpring. A

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ſyſtem of defence was therefore to be adopted; and for this purpoſe it was reſolved, firſt, to erect a fort at Sheerneſs for the ſecurity of the river, and to repair and ſtrengthen Langhorn point upon the coaſt of Eſſex and Suffolk; 2dly, to ſtation a good ſquadron of light frigates on the coaſt of Scotland, and another of the ſame ſtrength off Plymouth, both which ſhould intercept the trade of the Dutch, if they did not protect it with ſtrong convoys, which would break their fleet, and in thoſe caſes the frigates might eaſily retire into port; 3dly, to keep alſo ſome frigates conſtantly in the Downs, to chace picaroons from infeſting the coaſt, and to watch the motions of the enemy; 4thly, to put ſome of the greateſt ſhips at Chatham, Portſmouth, and other places, in readineſs againſt the end of the ſummer, before which time money might be provided, and the fleets of the enemy being weary and foul after a long cruize, it might be preſumed the French would return early into their own ports, which were ſo far off, and then the frigates from the weſt and the north might join the great ſhips, and either fight the Dutch, if they ſhould chuſe it, or infeſt their coaſt more than they had done this, and take all their homeward-bound ſhips; 5thly, to guard againſt being deprived of the neceſſary ſupplies of coal by ſending orders to Newcaſtle immediately to employ all their ſhips and all they could procure, with two or three veſſels given them by his majeſty, in conveying as much coals as poſ-

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ſible to London and the towns adjacent, before the enemy's fleet could put to ſea; and by aſſigning them convoys too ſtrong for privateers, or ſmall parties of men of war; and laſtly, to reſtrain merchant ſhips from going to ſea, and to adviſe them to countermand their former orders to all factors and correſpondents in foreign parts, till farther notice.

Humiliating and dangerous ſituation of England.

Some of theſe expedients were very humiliating to a power, whoſe dominion had long been eſtabliſhed at ſea; but they were neceſſary; and if they had been duly carried into execution, they would have prevented the injury and diſgrace, which the nation ſuffered in the enſuing ſummer. The king had not himſelf thought of this defenſive plan, but approved it very much, when he heard it diſcuſſed; and he liked it the better, becauſe at that time, as he was heartily weary of the war, ſo he was not without a reaſonable hope of peace. The grounds of this hope, the progreſs thereupon, the beginning of a treaty, and the concluſion thereof, will be the diſcourſe and relation we ſhall next enter upon.

Various efforts to bring about a peace.

However unfortunate the iſſue of the negociation with Denmark proved, through the unſteadineſs and perfidy of that court, Mr. Henry Coventry had conducted what had been committed to him with good effect in Sweden. Having diſpoſed that

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country to enter into a closer union with England, and to send two embassadors here for that purpose, he returned home to give his majesty an account of the progress he had made; and the embassadors arrived soon after, about the time of the great fire. Their professed purpose was to mediate a peace; but with a secret assurance to the king, that if a treaty should not take effect, the crown of Sweden would firmly unite itself to his majesty's interest, and engage in the war with him.

The embassador from Spain, and the emperor's envoy who was in the same interest, did heartily wish for a peace between England and Holland, with the exclusion of France. But if that could not be, they had much rather the war should continue as is was, that France should be comprehended in the peace; for which they had some reason. At this time the king of Spain was dead, and as that event was likely to put an end to the quiet of Flanders, they would have been glad to engage England in the defence of those provinces, in which Holland also could not feel itself unconcerned. Upon this ground they made some attempts, with the king's knowledge, to bring about a treaty of this kind; but De Witt, who entirely governed the councils of Holland, could not be induced to consent to any overtures made to separate before, or in the treaty, from France. He even informed that court of whatever was proposed by

by the Spaniard, or the emperor's envoy, or any other perſon to that purpoſe, and ſwelled his information beyond the truth, to heighten and endear his own honour and punctuality. CHAP. III. 1667.

The ſame event which made the Spaniard deſirous of a ſeparate conjunction with England and Holland, rendered the king of France very willing to put an end to this war, that he might be at full liberty to eſtabliſh his claims to Flanders, for which he was now making vigorous preparations. The queen-mother, who, ſince the beginning of the war, had fixed her reſidence at Paris, ſent over the earl of St. Alban's, under a pretence of looking after her affairs here, to inform the king of the good temper the French court was in, which was farther confirmed by letters from Monſieur Rouvigny to the earl during his ſtay here. The king had a very great objection to make any uſe of the earl's agency in this buſineſs; but he was contented that the earl ſhould make haſte back to Paris, and ſound the diſpoſition of the French king, whether it would not be poſſible to perſuade him to treat apart, and exclude Holland; or if that was not to be hoped, that at leaſt he might be brought to think it reaſonable, that the Dutch ſhould reſtore what they had taken on the coaſt of Guinea, and likewiſe pay a good ſum towards the charge of the war.

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Alternative propoſed by France.

A few days after the earl's return to Paris, he ſent an expreſs to inform his majeſty that, after ſome conferences with Monſieur Lionne the French miniſter, he found that the king of France could not quit the Dutch, except they refuſed to make peace upon juſt conditions. The miniſter had alſo told him, that the expectation of a ſum of money was a thing ſo unheard of after a war, that the very mention of it would ſhut the door againſt any treaty. But he gave two papers to the earl, to be tranſmitted to his majeſty, which, he ſaid, the Dutch would conſent to; but if more ſhould be required, the treaty was at an end, before it was begun, and the ſword muſt determine it. One of the papers contained this alternative, of which his majeſty might make his choice, whether all things ſhould continue in the ſtate in which they were at preſent, either ſide enjoying what they had got; or that a juſt computation ſhould be made of the loſſes on both ſides, and they who were found to have received moſt damage, ſhould be repaired at the charge of the other. The other paper was, that if his majeſty approved of either of theſe propoſals, he ſhould himſelf make choice of the place where to treat, whither all parties ſhould ſend their embaſſadors; but the French king deſired, that his majeſty would not make choice of any place in the king of Spain's dominions; and Mr. Van Beuninghen, the Dutch embaſſador at Paris had named Cologne, Francfort, or Hamburgh.

There

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There appeared little difficulty in the choice of the alternative, for the Engliſh had taken much more from the Dutch than they had taken from England. But then the place for the treaty was not ſo eaſy to be fixed upon. That ſuch deliberations, however, might not retard the progreſs of the treaty, which it was ſo much the king's intereſt to have in a ſtate of forwardneſs, if not concluded, before the Dutch ſhould put to ſea, and diſcover his inability to ſet out a fleet, he ſent back the expreſs with his acceptance of the firſt propoſal, to which as ſoon as the Dutch ſhould give their conſent, he would name ſome equal place for the treaty.

Before the anſwer could come from Paris, it was reſolved in the ſelect committee, on the ſuggeſtion of ſir William Coventry, ſupported by lord Arlington, that the Swediſh embaſſador in Holland ſhould be engaged to preſent a meſſage from his majeſty to the States General, offering to ſend his embaſſadors to treat of the peace at the Hague, that it might be concluded with the greater eaſe and diſpatch. The propoſers of this meaſure promiſed great advantage from it; but beſides that it was not very honourable to take a new courſe, after the anſwer juſt ſent to France, it was equally vain and impolitic to attempt to fight that court with its own favourite weapons, duplicity and artifice, in the uſe of which it had always diſcovered ſuperior expert-

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neſs. Nor did the ſcheme ſucceed in Holland. De Witt, who was preſent when the meſſage was delivered, directly ſaw the drift of it; and could not forbear telling the States, that the deſign was only to ſtir up the people againſt the magiſtrates, and in fact to make them the judges of the conditions of peace. By this and ſome other remarks he prevailed upon the States General forthwith to declare in the negative, that the treaty ſhould not be at the Hague; but, at the ſame time, after naming again Cologne and Francfort, they added, that if the king deſired to do them the honour to appoint it in any part of their dominions, which they ſhould not preſume to propoſe, they would conſent that it might be at Breda, or Maeſtricht, or a place or two more, which they named.

The king of France, who ſoon got intelligence of this proceeding, took it very ill, that, at a time when he acted with ſo much candour, and opened the door to a treaty, which the Dutch had peeviſhly ſhut againſt it, the king of England, after having made his choice of the alternative offered, ſhould ſend theſe underhand overtures to the Hague. But the Engliſh cabinet had as much reaſon to complain of France at the ſame time; for that court, upon receiving his majeſty's acceptance of the propoſed alternative, pretended that Monſieur Lionne had, through ſome overſight, omitted inſerting in the propoſals a clauſe reſpecting

ing the iſland of Poleron, which the Dutch peremptorily inſiſted upon keeping. Now this was the moſt offenſive obſtacle that could be thrown in the way of the negociation. Poleron was an intereſt ſo valuable, that Cromwell had inſiſted upon it as a principal article of the peace made with the Dutch, by which he acquired great popularity; and the king, upon his reſtoration, thought his honour ſo much concerned in not ſuffering his ſubjects to be deprived of that right which Cromwell had vindicated, that he would not conſent to a treaty with the Dutch, without the renewal of the ſame article, the non-performance of which, on their part, his majeſty had declared to be the principal cauſe of the rupture. The giving up that point would therefore, in the opinion of the world, draw the whole guilt of the war upon his majeſty, or, what would be as bad, the reproach of having purchaſed a peace upon conditions very diſhonourable to himſelf, and at the charge, and with the eſtate of his ſubjects. This was very ſtrongly urged to the king in the ſelect committee, and he was thereby perſuaded to ſend back a diſpatch to the earl of St. Alban's, with a very lively reſentment of the indignity offered to his majeſty, in the French court's receding from what had been propoſed by themſelves, and in aſking what his majeſty was reſolved never to grant.

Notwithſtanding

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Notwithſtanding all this, new overtures came from the king of France, who ſaid, that the Dutch had always proteſted againſt any treaty, without the releaſe of Poleron, though the mention of it had been unfortunately omitted by his miniſter; but, if he could not prevail upon his allies to recede from that point, he did not deſpair of obliging them to give a conſiderable ſum of money in compenſation for it. He therefore urged the appointment of commiſſioners to open a treaty, which, if once begun, he was ſure would not be broken off, before a peace ſhould be concluded. He engaged that the French embaſſadors, as ſoon as they met, ſhould propoſe a ceſſation from all acts of hoſtility, to which he had no doubt of an immediate aſſent. He added, that the Dutch had already promiſed that their fleet ſhould remain in their harbours till the middle of May; and he engaged on his own part that no hoſtile act ſhould be done by him from the preſent time, and that his fleet ſhould not ſtir out of port, and that his embaſſadors ſhould in all things behave themſelves as his majeſty could wiſh, that particular only of Poleron excepted, for which they ſhould alſo endeavour to obtain a compenſation.

After the warmth of his majeſty's indignation on the ſubject of that laſt article was a little abated, he was very willing to hear any thing that might

revive the hope of a treaty, being indeed juſtly alarmed at the conſequences that muſt attend the continuance of the war in his preſent condition. The mention alſo of a recompence for Poleron gave the hint of an expedient for leſſening the odium that might be incurred by giving up that iſland. The Eaſt-India company were ſent for, and told, that the king had overtures made him towards a peace, the greateſt obſtruction to which was likely to ariſe from their intereſt in the iſland of Poleron; but that having heard that the Dutch intended to offer an adequate recompence for it, he gave them this timely notice, that they might chuſe from among themſelves ſuch perſons as beſt underſtood their affairs, to go over with his embaſſadors, and to be conſulted when this point ſhould come into debate.

The whole buſineſs was now laid before a full meeting of the privy-council, who were all ſenſible of the neceſſity of diſpatch, from the ſtate of the king's affairs, and therefore readily concurred in whatever might accelerate the opening of the treaty. After a ſhort debate, Breda was thought the leaſt exceptionable place for a congreſs; and as nothing farther remained to be determined upon, but the appointment of embaſſadors, the king named for that purpoſe lord Hollis, who had been lately embaſſador in France, and Mr. Henry Coventry, who had ſhewn much ability in the negociation with Sweden.

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Sweden. Though nobody durſt object to the king's choice, yet it gave much ſecret offence to lord Arlington, who had deſigned that honour for himſelf and ſir Thomas Clifford, who was newly made a privy-councillor, and comptroller of the houſehold, upon the death of ſir Hugh Pollard.

Embaſſadors ſent by all parties to Breda.

Diſpatches were immediately ſent to Paris and to the Hague with advice of the king's determination; and the different powers, France, Holland, and Denmark ſoon appointed their reſpective deputies *. The Swediſh embaſſadors, who were the only mediators, prepared likewiſe to go to the treaty †, having agreed with the king, that, if the treaty ſhould not produce a peace, of which no man could be confident, their court would immediately declare in favour of England, both againſt the Dutch and the French. This aſſurance was the more encouraging, as the Swediſh army, deemed at that time the beſt in Europe, was very near the dominions of the States, and therefore capable of acting with immediate effect. In order to confirm Sweden in theſe ſentiments, means were found to ſupply that crown with a ſum of money

* The French plenipotentiaries were the count D'Eſtrades, and monſieur Courtine; thoſe of the States General, meſſrs. Bevernich, Hubert, and Yonſtal; and thoſe of Denmark, meſſrs. Klingenberg and Caniſius.

† One of them having died during the conferences at Breda, the Swediſh embaſſador to the States took his place.

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for the ſupport of its army; and the foundation was laid of another treaty, ſhortly after known by the name of the Triple Alliance, to the conferences upon which the baron D'Iſola, the emperor's envoy, was alſo privy. All things being thus adjuſted, and Breda having been agreed to by France, and Holland, the king on receiving notice that the French embaſſadors were on their way thither, ordered his own embaſſadors to depart, with the greater diſpatch, as it was now the month of May, when the ſeaſon for hoſtile operations being at hand made it neceſſary to ſecure that ceſſation, which the king of France had promiſed to obtain, as ſoon as the treaty ſhould be entered upon. A change, which took place about the ſame time in a very important department of adminiſtration, obliges me to interrupt for a moment my remarks on the farther progreſs of this treaty.

Death of the lord treaſurer.

The earl of Southampton, the lord treaſurer, for whoſe removal from office ſo many intrigues had been entered into, was now ready to expire with the ſtone. It had kept him in great pain many months, and he had ſent to Paris for a ſurgeon, in order to be cut, but had deferred it too long, the phyſicians not agreeing on the nature of his complaint; ſo that at laſt he grew too weak to undergo that operation. His enemies, who had made the king believe that his majeſty's ſervice ſuffered exceedingly

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ceedingly by the delay of his former purpoſe to diſmiſs the treaſurer, did not think that their triumph would be notorious enough, if they ſuffered the earl to die in the office. At the very time, therefore, that he was almoſt expiring with pain, they urged the king to ſend for the ſtaff; but the chancellor again prevailed upon him not to do ſo ungracious an act to one, who had ſerved him and his father ſo long and ſo eminently; an act alſo that was to ſo little purpoſe as the raviſhing an office unſeaſonably, which muſt in five or ſix days fall into his majeſty's hands, as it did within leſs time by the earl's death. Next day the office was put into commiſſion, and conſigned to ſir William Coventry, ſir Thomas Clifford, ſir Joſeph Duncombe, the duke of Albemarle, and lord Aſhley, the majority of whom was to make a quorum, which was evidently intended to throw the management of the whole buſineſs into the hands of the three firſt, the duke being added to the number only out of compliment, and lord Aſhley on account of his place as chancellor of the exchequer.

His office put into commiſſion.

The king expected that as ſoon as the embaſſadors ſhould meet, a ceſſation of hoſtilities would be the firſt thing agreed upon. The French propoſed it, according to their maſter's promiſe, and in a manner which ſeemed to imply their confidence in its being acceded to; nor did the Dutch ſeem

ſeem to refuſe it, but anſwered that the adjuſting all things in order to a ceſſation would require as much time as would ſerve to finiſh the treaty, conſidering that all material points were in a manner already ſettled by the king's having made his choice of the alternative offered him. This and ſome other inſtances of their ſupercilious behaviour made it manifeſt that the Dutch, fully ſenſible of their own ſuperiority, and of the king's unprepared and almoſt defenceleſs ſtate, were no farther inclined at that time to a peace, than as they were urged and almoſt compelled to it by the court of France, which was impatient to have it concluded. They would not hear any mention of the re-delivery of Poleron, which they ſaid the king of France had promiſed ſhould not be demanded, and as little about any recompence in money, nor would they ſuffer the merchant deputies from the Engliſh company to go to Amſterdam to confer with the Eaſt-India company there on the ſubject of any compoſition. It quickly appeared that they had revenge in their hearts for the laſt year's affront and damage in the road of Ulye; and that they were reſolved to ſeize the preſent opportunity of rendering De Witt's menaces effectual; for the penſionary had often ſaid, "that, before any peace, they would leave ſome ſuch mark of their having been upon the Engliſh coaſt, as the Engliſh had left upon that of Holland."

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Dutch fleet enter the Thames.

In the beginning of June, about a fortnight after the conferences were begun *, De Ruyter ſailed with the fleet for the coaſt of England; and having a fair wind, ſtood for the river Thames, which put the county of Kent into ſuch an alarm, that all near the ſea left their houſes and fled into the country. The earl of Winchelſea, who was lord lieutenant of that county, being at that time embaſſador at Conſtantinople, and the deputy lieutenants, from the diviſion and equality of their power, wanting ſufficient authority in a moment of ſuch general diſtraction, the king ſent down lieutenant-general Middleton with commiſſion to draw all the trained bands together, and all the forces that could be collected from the neighbouring counties; and in conſequence a very large body of horſe and foot was ſoon aſſembled at Rocheſter.

It now appeared how little had been done towards executing even the plan of defence, to which all preparations for the preſent year were, from the moſt unfortunate miſmanagement, neceſſarily confined. At Sheerneſs, where there had been ſo much

* The Engliſh embaſſadors did not arrive at Breda till the twentieth of May, and De Ruyter with fifty ſhips came on the eighth of June to the mouth of the Thames, whence he detached his vice-admiral Van Ghent on the tenth with ſeventeen of his lighteſt ſhips, and ſome fireſhips, which did the damage, and ſpread the conſternation that are now to be deſcribed.

talk

talk of erecting a fort for the ſecurity of the river, and whither the king himſelf had gone twice in the winter, there were a company or two of ſoldiers, but the fortifications were ſo weak and unfiniſhed, and all other means of reſiſtance ſo entirely wanting, that the Dutch fleet no ſooner approached it than with their cannon they beat all the works flat, and drove the men from the ground, and then landing ſome of their own troops in boats, they ſeemed reſolved to fortify and keep it. This put the country into a flame, and the news of it exceedingly diſturbed the king. He was ſenſible of the conſequence of the place, and how eaſily it might have been ſecured; and was the more troubled that it had been neglected. The duke of Albemarle was immediately ordered to march to Chatham with a party of the guards, and ſome regiments of the trained bands, which the city offered with great alacrity. When the duke reached Chatham, he found Middleton in ſo good a poſture, and ſo good a body of men, that he had no apprehenſion of any attempt the Dutch could make at land; and wrote with great confidence on that head to the king, informing his majeſty, at the ſame time, that he had put a chain over the river, which would hinder the Dutch from coming up, adding, that if they ſhould venture to land any where, which he believed they durſt not do, he would ſoon make them repent it.

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There was, indeed, no danger of the enemy's making any conſiderable attempt by land *: they were too wiſe to think of it: their buſineſs was an element they had more confidence in, and more power upon: they had good intelligence how looſely all things were left in the river; and therefore, as ſoon as the tide came to help them, they ſailed up, not minding the chain, which their ſhips broke in pieces, and paſſed without the leaſt pauſe. All men were ſo confounded to ſee the Dutch fleet advance over the chain, which they unſkilfully looked upon as a wall of braſs, that they knew not what to do. The duke of Albemarle himſelf, though of a temper void of fear, was totally at a loſs what expedients to adopt, or what orders to give in ſuch an emergency. There were two or three ſhips of the royal navy negligently left in the river, which might have been very eaſily drawn into ſafety, and could be of no imaginable uſe in the place, where they were left. Into one of theſe the duke put himſelf, and invited the young gentlemen, who were volunteers to accompany him, which they readily did in great numbers, with only pikes in their hands. But ſome of his friends whiſpered to him how unadviſed that

* Doleman, whoſe name was particularly mentioned with two others in the bill for attainting all Engliſh ſubjects who ſhould remain in the Dutch ſervice, was on board this fleet, and to ſhew his reſentment of that act, landed ſeveral times with a party of forces, and put the country under contribution.

reſolution

resolution was, and how desperate without probability of success, the fleet of the enemy approaching as fast as the tide would enable them. He was thus prevailed with to go on shore, which if he had not done, both he himself and two or three hundred of the nobility and prime gentry of the king would have inevitably perished. All those ships and some merchantmen laden and ready to put to sea, were presently in a flame, the Dutch commander, knowing that he could not carry them them off, having given orders to burn them *.

The people of Chatham, who may be in some sort looked upon as an army of seamen, and who might and ought to have secured all those ships, which they had time enough to have done, were in a state of the utmost distraction. The chief officers there employed all the boats and lighter vessels, which should have towed up the ships, to carry away their own goods and household stuff; and gave what they left behind for lost. Such in fact was the general confusion and despair, that if the Dutch had prosecuted their advantage with vigour, they might have burned the entire navy at

* They burnt three large ships of the line, which had been taken from themselves in the course of the war, and carried away with them the hull of the Royal Charles; and a little higher up the river, they also burnt the Royal Oak, the Royal London, and the Great James, besides several merchant ships of considerable value, as above intimated.

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Chatham, and taken or deſtroyed all the ſhips that lay higher up the river, and ſo have abundantly revenged themſelves for what they had ſuffered in the road of Ulye. But they thought they had done enough, and ſo made uſe of the ebb to carry them back again. Their fleet then ſailing round the coaſt continued to ſpread alarm, and to enjoy the pleaſure of their inſulting triumph with conſcious ſecurity *.

The report of the diſaſter in the river, and the flame of the ſhips which were burnt, made it eaſily believed in London, that all Chatham was reduced to aſhes, that the enemy had landed in many places, and that their fleet was already come up as far as Greenwich, with many other extravagancies which naturally aroſe in timid minds. Nor was the confuſion leſs in the court itſelf, where thoſe who had moſt promoted the rupture at firſt, and reproached ſuch as were againſt it with want of public ſpirit, and who had never ſpoken of the Dutch but with contempt, as a nation rather worthy to be cudgelled than fought with, were now the moſt dejected men that can be imagined.

* De Ruyter made an attempt to burn the ſhips in Portſmouth harbour, but failed, probably for want of fire-ſhips. He then ſailed to the weſtward, and took ſome ſhips in Torbay. Thence directing his courſe eaſtward, he chaced a ſquadron of nineteen ſhips, commanded by ſir Edward Spragge, who was obliged to retire up the Thames.

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They railed bitterly at the adviſers of ſo ruinous a war; and wiſhed that a peace, as the only hope, were made on any terms. In ſhort, the conſternation in both city and court was as great as if the Dutch had not only been maſters of the river, but had really landed an army of one hundred thouſand men. Whoever remembers that conjuncture, and was then preſent in the galleries and private apartments at Whitehall, whither all the world flocked with equal liberty, can eaſily call to mind many inſtances of ſuch wild deſpair, and even ridiculous apprehenſions as I am willing to forget, and would not that the leaſt mention of them ſhould remain.

This unreaſonable diſtemper did not paſs away, when it was known that the Dutch fleet had left the river, and had withdrawn their men from Sheerneſs, which was a manifeſtation very ſufficient that they had no deſign upon land. There remained a ſtrong perſuaſion in the minds of many, that they would return again; in which they were confirmed by intelligence that the Dutch were ſtill upon the coaſts, and gave the ſame alarm now to Eſſex and Suffolk, as they had before done to Kent. It was ſaid, that they meant to attack Harwich, which drew all the trained bands of thoſe counties to the ſea-ſide; and the duke of York went thither to conduct them, if there ſhould be occaſion.

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In this perplexity the king was not at eaſe, and the leſs ſo, becauſe every man took the liberty to ſpeak to him of the diſcontents and general outcry of the people all over the kingdom, and to give him counſel what was to be done. Some adviſed him to call the parliament, which had been prorogued to the twentieth of October, and it was now only the middle of June; but it being a current opinion, that upon a prorogation the parliament cannot be convened before the day, though upon an adjournment it may, they brought Mr. Prynne, the keeper of the records in the Tower, privately to the king, to ſatisfy him, that upon an extraordinary occaſion it might be done; and Prynne's judgment, which his majeſty undervalued enough in all other caſes, very much confirmed him in what he had a mind to. He fancied it was the only expedient that would give him eaſe in his preſent difficulties; though moſt diſcerning men thought that ſuch a conjuncture was ſo unſeaſonable for the meeting and deliberations of a parliament, that if they had been ſitting, the moſt wholeſome advice would be to ſeparate them, till that occaſion ſhould be over, which could be beſt provided for by a more contracted council.

Among other diſcontents, which his majeſty did not ſuppoſe it poſſible to allay without the aid of parliament, the clamour of the army gave him particular

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particular uneaſineſs. In the beginning of the ſummer, when he had reſolved to have no fleet at ſea, there were many reaſons which induced him to increaſe his forces at land *; and that he might do it, without jealouſy of the people, he gave commiſſion to three or four perſons of the nobility of great fortunes and good names to raiſe regiments of foot, and to others for troops of horſe, which was done with great expedition, and upon their firſt muſters they all received one month's pay. Some of thoſe levies were ſent to quell an inſurrection at Inverneſs, and others were ordered to different ports upon the coaſt; but it was in view, that, upon the expiration of that month, there muſt be new pay provided for thoſe regiments and troops. Then the trained bands, which had been drawn together, had continued for one month, which was as long as the law required; and now expected to receive pay, or to be diſmiſſed. A mutiny, or ſome other violence was therefore apprehended, and money ſeemed to be the only remedy, which the new commiſſioners of the treaſury wanting credit to procure, they were very importunate with the king to iſſue out his proclamation for the immediate meeting of parliament as the only reſource.

* His principal reaſon was to guard againſt the juſt reſentment of his ſubjects, whoſe generoſity and confidence he had abuſed, whoſe blood and treaſure he had waſted, and whom he had involved in unprecedented diſgrace and calamity.

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Debates in council.

After the king had taken this reſolution, he deſired to make it appear the reſult of a debate in council, though he knew it was contrary to the ſenſe of many of the members. Having called them together, he opened the buſineſs himſelf: he told them, "that they all ſaw the ſtreights he was in, the inſolence of the enemy, and the general diſtemper of the nation, which made it manifeſt that it was neceſſary for him to have an army ready againſt whatever might happen: that he had no money, and knew not where to get any, nor could imagine any other way to provide againſt the miſchiefs which were in view, than by convening the parliament." He then expreſſed a wiſh to know the opinion of his council on this or any other expedient; but declared his own ſentiments ſo fully, that it was plain enough, that he thought that remedy the beſt that could be applied.

When his majeſty had done ſpeaking what he intended, three or four of thoſe who had privately given the advice, and were very deſirous that it might be followed, enlarged themſelves in the debate, that the ſoldiers could not be kept together without money, which was only to be obtained from parliament, the aſſembling of whom, notwithſtanding the prorogation, they were confident might be lawfully and regularly done. In order to prevent oppoſition, they challenged thoſe, who might

might be of a contrary opinion, to propoſe ſome other way how the king might get money.

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It was eaſy for the chancellor to perceive that this challenge was particularly levelled at him, as he had not been any way reſerved in his private diſcourſe, to urge ſeveral reaſons againſt the meaſure. He now ſaid, "he knew well upon what diſadvantage he ſpoke, and how unpopular a thing it was to ſpeak againſt convening the parliament in thoſe ſtreights, which ſeemed to be capable of no other remedy. Yet ſince he thought neither the remedy proper to the diſeaſe, nor that it could be applied in time, he could not concur with thoſe who adviſed it. "Moſt men," he obſerved, "who had any knowledge in the law, did confeſs, that when the parliament ſtood prorogued to a certain day, the convening them upon a ſooner day was very doubtful; and to him, upon all the diſquiſitions he could make, it was very clear that it could not be done; and therefore he deſired the judges might be conſulted on that point before any reſolution ſhould be taken *. The temper of both

* It is curious to ſee the chancellor ſo vehement in arguing againſt the right of convening parliament upon any emergency during a prorogation, in the preſence of a king, whoſe prerogative he himſelf had fatally contributed to carry to the moſt unconſtitutional extent in matters of much greater importance;—a king, who cared neither for the forms of law, the privileges of parliament, or the rights of the people, when they lay in the way of his arbitrary purpoſes.

houſes,"

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houſes," he added, "was well known, and that it could not be preſumed, that when they ſhould come together, the firſt debate would be on the manner of their being ſo brought together, and whether they were in a capacity to act; and he doubted there would be very few, who would be forward to paſs an act in a ſeaſon, when the validity of it might be queſtioned by thoſe, who had no mind to pay any obedience to it: but if their meeting was deſigned for no other purpoſe than to take their advice upon all occurrences, he thought it well worth conſidering, whether in the preſent general diſtemper, ſuch an aſſembly might not interrupt all other conſultations and expedients, and yet propoſe none, and ſo increaſe the confuſion." He concluded, "that, if the urgency of affairs was of ſuch a nature, as to make it abſolutely neceſſary to convene a parliament, and if that which ſtood prorogued, could not lawfully re-aſſemble till the twentieth of October, as he was confident it could not, there was no queſtion to be made but that the king might, by his proclamation, preſently diſſolve the prorogued parliament, and iſſue out writs for the ſpeedy calling of another, againſt which there could be no exception."

A few of the chancellor's ſtaunchſt friends declared themſelves of the ſame opinion, which greatly diſappointed the other party, who hoped the

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the chancellor would be left alone in the ſupport of an advice, which they believed nobody elſe would have the courage to defend. The advocates for immediately calling together the prorogued parliament declaimed vehemently againſt the idea of a diſſolution. They magnified the affections of both houſes; ſaid that the king could never hope to ſee a parliament better conſtituted for his ſervice, or ſo many of the members at his diſpoſal; but that he muſt expect that the preſbyterians would be choſen in all places, and that thoſe, who were now moſt eminent for oppoſing his wiſhes, would be re-elected, while his moſt zealous friends would be every where thrown out. The debate on this point was likely to beget ſome warmth, when the king put an end to it, by declaring his confidence in the preſent parliament and his reſolution not to diſſolve it; and by deſiring the members of the council to confine their diſcourſe to the other point, what he was to do towards the raiſing of money, or how he ſhould be able to maintain the army, if he deferred calling the parliament till the day to which it ſtood prorogued.

The old argument, that nothing could be done without the aid of parliament, was now renewed with greater confidence; and the ſupporters of it demanded, rather in an inſulting manner, that thoſe, who were againſt it, might be obliged to offer their advice, what other courſe ſhould be taken

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taken. His majeſty himſelf aſked the chancellor with ſome quickneſs what he propoſed, to which he replied, "that if in truth what was ſo confidently inſiſted upon by others, was in the nature of it not practicable, or being practiſed could not produce the effect propoſed, it ought to be laid aſide, that men might apply their thoughts unbiaſſed to find out ſome other expedient: that he thought it very clear that the parliament could not be aſſembled, though the proclamation were iſſued out that very hour, within leſs than twenty days; and that even ſuppoſing them willing, and checked by no doubt of their being lawfully qualified to grant a ſupply of money, all men knew the formality of that tranſaction would require ſo much time, that money could not be thereby obtained ſoon enough either to raiſe an army, or to maintain that part of it already raiſed, to prevent the landing of an enemy now upon the coaſt, and, as ſome pretended, ready every day to make a deſcent; and yet the ſending out a proclamation for re-aſſembling the parliament, would inevitably put an end to all other counſels and deliberations: that for his part he believed that the Dutch had ſatisfied themſelves in the affront they had already given, and could not be in any condition to purſue it, without the aſſiſtance of the French, of whom there could be now no well-founded apprehenſion; and that his majeſty had reaſon to believe, that the preſent treaty would in a ſhort time put an end to all hoſtilities,

ſtilities, though the power and artifice of De Witt had hitherto prevented a ceſſation: that, as to the ſupport of the troops now on foot to guard the coaſts, ſince money could not be found for their pay, without which free quarter could not be avoided, the only practicable method of preventing this laſt evil was to write to the lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of the counties, where the army was obliged to remain, that they would cauſe proviſions of all kinds to be brought into thoſe quarters, that ſo the ſoldiers may not be compelled to ſtraggle abroad to provide their own victuals, which would end in the worſt kind of free quarter; and that the like letters might be written to the neighbouring counties, wherein no ſoldiers were quartered, to raiſe money by way of contribution, (as in the late civil war) which ſhould be abated out of the next impoſitions, that ſo the troops might be enabled to continue in the poſts where they were for the defence of the kingdom, in the benefit of which thoſe other counties, though not immediately threatened, had their ſhare, and without which they muſt themſelves be expoſed to the diſorder of the ſoldiers, and poſſibly to the invaſion of the enemy." This advice ſerved only to furniſh the chancellor's adverſaries with very plauſible means of ruining him with both the parliament and the people. The council, though far from being unanimous, acquieſced in the contrary reſolution, as being agreeable to the king; and a proclamation was

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was accordingly iſſued to require both houſes to meet on a day appointed in the beginning of Auguſt.

All this time the treaty proceeded at Breda as faſt as the imperious humour of the Dutch would ſuffer it. The French king declared himſelf much offended with their proceedings at ſea; and his embaſſadors ſpoke ſo loud, that the States, having fully gratified their intended revenge, gave inſtructions to their deputies not to be very peremptory upon ſmall objects; and ſent ſuch orders to De Ruyter, that there was no more hoſtility of any moment: only their fleet remained at ſea, that it might appear they were maſters of it. But notwithſtanding this ſhew of condeſcenſion on the part of the States, they were determined to inſiſt upon their own terms in the moſt important articles; and it is probable that the ſame reaſon, which moved the French to uſe all poſſible diligence to bring the treaty to an end, prevailed with the Dutch to uſe all the delays they could, that it might be prolonged. The king of France, whoſe troops were in readineſs to invade Flanders, was impatient to march, and yet deſirous of firſt concluding this treaty, that he might be at liberty to enter into ſuch an alliance with England, as might favour his purpoſes; and the Dutch, on the other hand, who had no mind that the expedition ſhould be proſecuted, and as much feared the conſequences

ſequences of ſuch an alliance, ſecretly wiſhed that the treaty might not be concluded till the winter drew nearer.

While matters ſeemed to remain in this ſtate of ſuſpenſe, the king of France put an end to all farther doubts of his intentions, by marching into the heart of Flanders, not without ſome intimation given by his embaſſadors, that if the Dutch did not finiſh the treaty, he would conclude for what concerned himſelf. In truth, he had it in his power to give the law to either party, and to incline the balance to whatever ſide he pleaſed. But willing alſo to conciliate both as far as poſſible, he ſtrove to keep up the appearance of a mediator, while he ſecretly flattered each with aſſurances of his partial regard. The ſuddenneſs of his march into Flanders ſpread ſuch an alarm in Holland, that the States quickly removed all obſtacles to the concluſion of the treaty, except making any compenſation for the iſland of Poleron, or ſatisfying the Engliſh merchants for the loſs of the two ſhips referred to a court of judicature in the treaty of 1662; both which they ſtill pertinaciouſly refuſed. As theſe had been the principal grounds of the war, our embaſſadors would not conſent without farther knowledge of the king's pleaſure; and ſo one of them, Mr. Henry Coventry, came to give his majeſty an account of all particulars, and to receive his final determination.

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Peace concluded.

When it was found that France would not abandon the intereſt of the Dutch in thoſe material articles, though her embaſſadors had oppoſed other pretenſions of theirs, and had even uſed menaces in reſiſting ſome violent propoſals made by the Dane, his majeſty ſent for the Eaſt India company, and mentioned his great unwillingneſs to do any thing to their injury, and his fixt reſolution never to releaſe their right without their own conſent. They anſwered, "that they did not wiſh their private concerns ſhould interrupt what was ſo neceſſary for the kingdom at large; and acknowledged that, if the war continued, they ſhould in many reſpects ſuſtain a greater loſs than could be repaired even by the acquiſition of the objects now in diſpute: they were therefore willing to ſacrifice their claims to the public peace." This obſtacle being thus removed, Mr. Coventry returned to Breda, and in a few days after his arrival there all matters were adjuſted, and the treaty was ſigned on the twenty-firſt of July *.

There

* By this diſgraceful termination of the war Charles was forced to relinquiſh all the objects, for which he pretended to have undertaken it. In the third and fourth articles of the particular treaty with Holland it was ſtipulated, that all acquiſitions of territory, or any other ſpecies of property made by either party, whether during the war, or before, ſhould remain with the preſent poſſeſſors without any compenſation, or reſtitution for the ſame. Thus the iſland of Poleron and Downing's claim of eight hundred thouſand pounds for pretended injuries to the

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There could be no longer any reaſon for perſiſting in the former purpoſe to urge parliament to a very diſputable exerciſe of their authority. There was now no farther uſe for an army, and cauſe enough to diſband the forces already raiſed. As the proclamation had been iſſued for their meeting in the beginning of Auguſt, his majeſty went to the houſe of lords on the day appointed, and ſending for the commons to attend him, he told his parliament, "that ſince the condition of his affairs was not ſo full of difficulty, as it had been when he ſent out his proclamation; and ſince many were of opinion, that there might doubts ariſe on the regularity of their meeting, he was content to diſmiſs them till the twentieth of October." Upon this both houſes ſeparated without any debate.

Engliſh merchants were given up without the ſmalleſt ſatisfaction. The country of Arcadia in North America was alſo exchanged for ſome conqueſts made by France in the Weſt Indies; and as a reward to the king of Denmark for the part he had acted, a debt due from him to the Hamburgh company was cancelled.

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Inquiry

Inquiry into the miſmanagement of the late war—Appointment of commiſſioners of accounts—Impatience of miniſtry for the money-bill—Violent conteſt between both houſes on a point of judicature.

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THE relief from thoſe cares, in which the court favourites were involved by the diſaſtrous incidents of the war, ſerved only to give them more leiſure for proſecuting their intrigues and private enmities with greater application. The chancellor, by having been unfortunately looked upon as the firſt miniſter, incurred all the blame and reproach of the people for every fault of adminiſtration, and was thus ſhut out from the beſt ſhelter againſt the ſtorms of a court, the eſteem and confidence of his fellow-ſubjects. His intereſt in the houſe of commons began to decline, as ſoon as the ambitious and the venal found, that, notwithſtanding his oſtenſible eminence, all favours flowed through a different channel. He had alſo given great offence to many of the independent members of the houſe of commons, by his indiſcreet vehemence in the debates, both in council and parliament during the laſt ſeſſion. But his late advice to the king to diſſolve them, which ſir William Coventry took care to repreſent with every malicious aggravation, filled many of them with implacable reſentment. The chancellor was not uninformed of the combination againſt him, which every day gained ſtrength; but he thought him-

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ſelf ſecure in the king's juſtice; and though his majeſty's kindneſs was much leſſened, he never ſuſpected that he would conſent to his ruin. A little more time convinced him of his fatal error.

Meſſage from the king.

About the latter end of Auguſt, the king ſent his brother, the duke of York, to the chancellor, to tell him, that his majeſty had received very particular and certain intelligence, that, when the parliament ſhould meet again, they were reſolved to impeach the chancellor, who was grown very odious to them, not only for his having oppoſed them in all thoſe things upon which they had ſet their hearts, but more eſpecially for his having adviſed the king to diſſolve them; that the ſteps, which they would infallibly take, in conſequence of ſuch a reſolution, would be a great diſhonour to his majeſty, and obſtruct all his affairs, nor ſhould he be able longer to protect him, or divert them; that it would be therefore neceſſary for his ſervice, and likewiſe for the preſervation of the chancellor, that he ſhould deliver up the ſeal, the manner of doing it being left to his own choice. The chancellor was thunder-ſtruck at this meſſage, which was the more cruel, as being ſent him when ſinking under the weight of domeſtic affliction for the late death of his wife. He remonſtrated ſtrongly with the duke, and a few days after with the king himſelf, on the rigour and injuſtice of this proceeding, which prejudged him by ſuch a ſignal mark

mark of the king's diſpleaſure, and left him expoſed not only to the reſentment of the commons, which he was too well ſhielded by conſcious innocence to dread, but to the rage of the people, who had been wrought upon, with great artifice and induſtry, to believe that he was the author and adviſer of every think they did not like. All this proved ineffectual; for though the duke intereſted himſelf in the chancellor's favour, the king remained inflexible, pretending that he himſelf was at the mercy of parliament, and that he could not oppoſe them in a matter, upon which they were reſolutely bent.

Sir Orlando Bridgman made lord-keeper.

Nothing was now ſpoken of at court but the chancellor's expected diſgrace. He had declared to the king, that he would by no means ſuffer it to be believed, that he himſelf was willing to deliver up the ſeal; and his majeſty ſeemed to heſitate on the ungraciouſneſs of forcing it from him. In this ſuſpenſion, the common ſubject of debate was not, whether the chancellor was innocent, but whether, when the king had reſolved to remove him, and had proceeded ſo far towards it, he ſhould retract his purpoſe, and be governed by his brother, who was known to be very urgent with his majeſty in the chancellor's behalf. Mr. Brounker openly declared, that his majeſty had reſolved upon it above two months before, and that it would not conſiſt with his honour to be hectored out of it by his

brother, who was wrought upon by his wife's crying. Sir William Coventry boasted that he had 1667. advised the king to remove the chancellor, as a man odious to the parliament, and that his majesty would be ruined, if he did it not. Sir William went farther; and finding that the duke of York was highly offended, that his secretary should presume to shew so much malice towards a person, for whom his highness was much concerned, he resigned the office, by which he had acquired vast wealth. Lady Castlemaine, lord Arlington, Mr. May, and the rest of that junto used no reserve in their invectives against the chancellor, and even told the king, that he would be looked upon as a child if he receded from his purpose. His majesty being thus re-confirmed sent secretary Morrice on the thirtieth of August, with a warrant under the sign manual, to require and receive the great seal, which the chancellor immediately delivered to him, with all expressions of duty to the king. As soon as the secretary presented it to his majesty in his closet, Mr. May went in, and fell upon his knees, and kissed his majesty's hand, telling him, "that he was now KING, which he had never been before." The seal was then committed to sir Orlando Bridgman, thereupon made lord keeper.

New tempest raised against the disgraced minister.

The chancellor believed that the storm was now over, for he had no apprehension of the displeasure of the commons, or of any thing they could say or do

do againſt him. He reſolved to ſtay at his houſe till parliament ſhould meet, that he might not be thought afraid of being called to account, but he did not mean to go thither, which he was informed would be ill taken. His intention was then to retire into the country, and to live there privately. But theſe hopes and plans of his were all diſconcerted and blaſted by a new tempeſt more violent and terrible than the former. The perſons, who had ſucceeded ſo effectually in alienating the king's eſteem from the chancellor, at firſt only adviſed his removal, as a perſon odious to the parliament, and whom the commons were reſolved to impeach, which, they ſaid, would put his majeſty into a ſtreight, either to remove or deſert an old ſervant, which would not be for his honour, or, by protecting him, deprive himſelf of all thoſe benefits, which he expected from the parliament; but they aſſerted, that the diſmiſſing him before the meeting of parliament would not only ſave the king's honour, by not having it forced upon him, but gratify both houſes ſo much, that they would deny nothing which his majeſty ſhould demand of them. When by theſe inſinuations they had procured his removal, and made themſelves more neceſſary to the king, they proſecuted what they had begun with greater animoſity. They told the king, that if the parliament ſuſpected that his majeſty ſtill retained any kindneſs towards the earl of Clarendon, they would not be ſatisfied with his removal, but

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apprehend that he would be again received into his majesty's favour; and he would, in the mean time, have so much credit in both houses, especially if he sat in the house of peers, which they undertook to know he meant to do, that he would be able to obstruct whatsoever his majesty desired. They said it was therefore necessary, that his majesty should declare his prejudices against the earl so strongly, that nobody should have cause to fear his being ever again received into trust.

By these means the king was incited to express in all companies his great dissatisfaction at the earl's misconduct. He frequently declared, that the earl was so imperious that he would endure no contradiction; that he had a faction in the house of commons who opposed every thing that concerned his majesty's service, if it were not recommended to them by him; and that he had given him very ill advice concerning the parliament, which offended his majesty very much. All this, being often repeated by the king, was soon spread abroad, to the great diminution of the unfortunate earl's credit and interest.

Some victim thought necessary to appease the resentment of the nation.

Besides the gratification of personal malice, and the removal of the only obstacle to the uncontrouled sway of the junto, they had another end to serve in bringing down upon the earl's head the loudest burst of royal displeasure and resentment. The people,

people, groaning under the weight of taxes, and filled with juſt indignation at the diſgraceful iſſue of the war, could be appeaſed only by ſome ſignal ſacrifice for all the evils of miſgovernment. The houſe of commons alſo had in the laſt ſeſſion ſhewn much ill humour at the waſteful expenditure of the public money, and they were likely to find in the late defenceleſs condition of the kingdom, after all their ſupplies, ſtill juſter matter of complaint. It was therefore neceſſary to hold out one conſpicuous object to attract all their fury, and thus to divert it from the real delinquents. Embezzlement, profuſion, and neglect of duty were crimes, in which ſuch prodigious numbers were involved, that every man, who dreaded inquiry, was glad to find one victim ſingled out, and devoted to deſtruction:

——Quæ ſibi quiſque timebat,
Unius in miſeri exitium converſa tulêre.

Cauſe of the duke of Buckingham's perſonal animoſity.

To this combination of the ambitious and the guilty againſt the earl there was now added another very dangerous enemy, the duke of Buckingham, of whoſe ſudden reſtoration to the favour of the court it will be proper to give ſome account. I have before noticed his quarrel with lady Caſtlemaine, and his endeavours to gain a formidable party in both houſes, by which he was enabled to croſs every meaſure which the king had moſt at heart, and to carry through ſuch bills as were moſt contradictory

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contradictory to his majesty's wishes. His talents of ridicule in exposing all the vices of the court, which he was so well acquainted with, having long been himself one of the principal actors in every dissolute scene, were exerted in private, in a manner still more provoking than his public opposition. After the end of the last session, he went into the country; and in several places spoke not only of the court, and government, but of the king's person with greater licence than any body else dared to do; of all which his majesty had intelligence, and was at that time without doubt more offended with the duke than with any man in England, and had really great provocation to jealousy of his fidelity, as well as of his respect and affection. Lord Arlington, as secretary of state, had received several informations of dangerous words spoken by him against the king; and of his intimacy and correspondence with persons the most suspected for disloyalty. Some of the proofs appeared so strong against him, that the king, after consulting with the chancellor, sent a serjeant at arms with a warrant under his sign manual to apprehend the duke, and to bring him before one of the secretaries of state, to answer to such crimes as should be objected against him.

The warrant, however, was to little purpose: the duke eluded the serjeant's pursuit, and even caused him to meet with a very menacing rebuff for

for desiring admittance into a house where he knew the duke was. The king was so much offended at this indignity shewn to a state-officer acting by his majesty's express orders, that, after mentioning it at the council-board, he publicly declared the duke to be no longer of that number, and caused his name to be struck out of the list of privy-councillors. He also appointed the earl of Rochester to his place in the bed-chamber, and revoking his commission of lord-lieutenant of the East-riding of Yorkshire, he granted it to the earl of Burlington. His majesty at the same time issued out a proclamation for apprehending the duke, and inhibiting all persons to entertain, receive, or conceal him; so that it was not possible for the king to give stronger proofs of his resolution to degrade and punish him.

Upon these rigorous steps the duke came from the country to town, where he could be more easily concealed. He sent several times to the chancellor to request an interview, which the latter very properly refused till the duke should surrender himself. By means of private applications, however, the king's displeasure was softened, and the quarrel was also made up with lady Castlemaine. A great void had been felt at the nightly meetings from the absence of the duke, whose wit was the soul of the conversation. It was also thought impolitic to carry resentment too far against one who had

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had ſuch an intereſt in both houſes, as enabled him to be highly uſeful, or the contrary. After the formality therefore of ſurrendering himſelf to the lieutenant of the Tower, and undergoing a ſhort examination at the council-board, he was ſet at liberty, and ſoon after received by the king with extraordinary grace, and reſtored to all the honours and offices, of which he had been before deprived.

In this reconciliation with the court, care was taken to infuſe into the duke not only all the rancour of the party, but the ſtrongeſt ſpirit of perſonal revenge againſt the chancellor. He was informed and aſſured, that all the proceedings to his diſadvantage were by the advice of the chancellor, who ſaid, that he was to be ſteward at the duke's trial. This irritating falſehood aroſe from the following circumſtance. One day whilſt that matter was depending, and when ſome witneſſes were to be examined, touching the duke's correſpondence with ſeditious perſons, lord Arlington deſired that the chancellor might be preſent, which the king ſeeming to approve, the chancellor deſired to be excuſed, and among other reaſons, ſaid, "that if the teſtimony of witneſſes made good all that was ſuggeſted, and the duke ſhould be brought to a trial, the king might probably command him to execute the office of high-ſteward, as he had lately done in the trial of lord Morley; and in that reſpect, it would be incongruous for him to be preſent

ſent at the examinations." It is no wonder, that the report of this, ſtript of all the real circumſtances, and aggravated by ingenious malice, ſhould have greatly enraged the duke, and prompted him to exert all his powers of intrigue, perſuaſion, and intereſt, to procure an impeachment of the earl of Clarendon.

The king informs Parliament of the change in his councils.

The parliament met again upon the tenth of October, when the king, in a ſhort ſpeech told them, "that there had been ſome former miſcarriages, which had occaſioned ſome difference between him and them: but that he had now altered his councils, and made no queſtion but that they ſhould henceforward agree: he was reſolved to give them all ſatisfaction, and did not doubt but that they would ſupply his neceſſities, and provide for the payment of his debts." His majeſty threw out an inſinuation, that what had been formerly done amiſs, had been by the advice of the perſon, whom he had removed from his councils.

After the king ended, the lord-keeper made firſt a ſhort apology for the ſtep taken in the ſummer to convene the parliament when under a prorogation, and then defer its meeting till the time at firſt appointed. He then informed them of the concluſion of the peace; and took notice of the commiſſion appointed by the king to ſtate the public accounts, which not having anſwered his majeſty's expectations,

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tions, he left the parliament to follow their own method, and to examine the accounts as ſtrictly as they pleaſed. He added, that his majeſty truſted in their affection and endeavours to preſerve a good underſtanding between him and his people, and to imprint upon the hearts of his ſubjects that known truth, *that there is no diſtinct intereſt between the king and his people, but the good of one is the good of both.*

Addreſs of thanks on the earl's removal.

When the commons returned to their houſe, a motion was made to ſend a meſſage of thanks to the king for his gracious expreſſions, and for the many good things he had done, and particularly for removing the chancellor; but this not being countenanced by the majority of the houſe, a committee was appointed to prepare a meſſage, in which the diſmiſſion of the chancellor was not to be noticed, as the commons were unacquainted with his majeſty's motives for that reſolution. The king declared himſelf very much offended that the motion had not ſucceeded, and more that it had been oppoſed by ſome of his own ſervants, and commanded to preſs and renew it, for that his honour was concerned. Upon this the vote of thanks in the form at firſt propoſed was again debated, and carried, though not without ſtrong oppoſition on the part of the earl of Clarendon's ſtill remaining friends.

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When the addreſs of thanks was ſent up to the lords for their concurrence, they at firſt refuſed it, on the pretence of their having thanked his majeſty for his ſpeech on the ſame day, ſo that it, would be abſurd and unprecedented to join in any other addreſs on the ſame ſubject. But their reluctance was overcome by the ſame means before employed with the commons. The king reproached many of the lords for preſuming to oppoſe what was ſo abſolutely neceſſary for the ſervice; and ſent to the archbiſhop of Canterbury, deſiring him, in his majeſty's name, to command all the bench of biſhops to concur in it, with menacing intimations if they refuſed. The motion for the addreſs being now renewed, it was carried by a great majority; and being preſented by both houſes, was received very graciouſly by the king, as a boon he looked for; and in his reply to that part which reſpected the diſgraced chancellor*, he ſaid, "he would never employ the earl of Clarendon again in any public affairs whatſoever." This anſwer, through the duke of Buck-

* The addreſs of thanks had reference to four objects; 1ſt. to his majeſty's having diſbanded the forces lately raiſed; 2dly, to his having diſmiſſed the papiſts out of his guards, and from other military employments; 3dly, to his having revoked the Canary patent, and thrown open that trade to all his ſubjects; and laſtly, to his having removed the late lord chancellor from the exerciſe of public truſt and employment in affairs of ſtate.

ingham's

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ingham's perſuaſions, was entered in the journal of the lords, as a particular record of his majeſty's diſpleaſure againſt the earl.

Cabals entered into for his farther proſecution.

Several cabals were now entered into for the purpoſe of impeaching the earl; and after ſome days ſpent in cloſe contrivances and combinations, Mr. Seymour, one of the boldeſt ſpeakers of the duke of Buckingham's party, roſe in the houſe of commons, and made a long and inflammatory ſpeech on the late chancellor's corrupt practices and pernicious counſels, ſtating a variety of charges, which he ſaid he could prove, and concluding with a motion for immediately ſending up to the lords to accuſe the earl of Clarendon of high-treaſon, and to require that his perſon might be ſecured. Mr. Seymour was ſeconded by ſome others, who were equally liberal of their bitter invectives. In the courſe of the debate, it was juſtly argued by the diſpaſſionate part of the houſe, as well as by the earl's friends, that it would be premature to vote an impeachment upon mere aſſertions, or without ſuch proofs, as might at leaſt carry with them a ſtrong preſumption of guilt. Hereupon a committee was appointed to conſider of all particulars, which ſhould be preſented againſt him, and to make a report thereof, that the houſe may then purſue ſuch meaſures as ſhould appear juſt and adviſable.

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In a few days the propoſed articles of impeachment were thrown into ſome form, and reported to the houſe. The heads were;

Heads of the charges brought againſt him.

That the chancellor had traiterouſly, about the month of June laſt, adviſed the king to diſſolve the parliament, and ſaid, "that there could be no farther uſe of parliaments: that it was a fooliſh conſtitution, and not fit to govern by: that it could not be imagined that three or four hundred country gentlemen could be either prudent men or ſtateſmen; and that it would be beſt for the king to raiſe a ſtanding army, and to govern by that:" whereupon it being demanded, how that army ſhould be maintained? he anſwered, "by contribution and free-quarter, as the late king maintained his army in the war:"

That he had, in the hearing of ſeveral perſons, reported that the king was a papiſt in his heart, or popiſhly affected, or had uſed words to that effect:

That he had adviſed the king to grant a charter to the Canary company, for which he had received great ſums of money:

That he had raiſed great ſums of money by the ſale of offices, which ought not to be ſold; and granted injunctions to ſtop proceedings at law, and diſſolved them afterwards for money:

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That he had introduced an arbitrary government in his majeſty's plantations, and had cauſed ſuch as had complained to his majeſty and privy council of it to be long impriſoned for their preſumption; and that he had protracted and rejected a propoſition, which had been made for the preſervation of Nevis and St. Chriſtopher's, and for reducing the French plantations to his majeſty's obedience:

That he had cauſed Quo Warrantos to be iſſued out againſt moſt corporations in England, although their charters were newly confirmed by act of parliament, till they paid him good ſums of money, and then the Quo Warrantos were diſcharged:

That he had received great ſums of money for the ſettlement of Ireland:

That he had deluded the king, and betrayed the nation in all foreign treaties, and negociations, eſpecially concerning the late war:

That he had procured his majeſty's cuſtoms to be farmed at under rates, knowing them to be ſo; and cauſed many pretended debts to be paid by his majeſty, to the payment whereof his majeſty was not in ſtrictneſs bound; for all which the earl had received great ſums of money:

That

That he had received bribes from the company of vintners, that they might continue the prices of the wines, and might be freed from the penalties which they were liable to:

That he had raiſed in a ſhort time a greater eſtate than could be lawfully got; and that he had got the grant of ſeveral of the crown lands, contrary to his duty:

That he had adviſed and effected the ſale of Dunkirk to the French king, for leſs money than the ammunition, artillery, and ſtores were worth:

That he had cauſed the king's letters under the great ſeal to one Dr. Crowther to be altered, and the enrolment thereof to be unduly razed:

That he had in an arbitrary way examined and brought into queſtion divers of his majeſty's ſubjects, concerning their lands and properties, and determined thereof at the council-board, and ſtopt the proceedings at law, and threatened ſome that pleaded the ſtatute of 17 Car.

That he was a principal author of that fatal counſel of dividing the fleet about June 1666.

The committee reported another article, that he had kept up correſpondence with Cromwell and

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his accomplices, when he was in parts beyond the ſeas, attending his majeſty; and had thereby adhered to the king's enemies. But there were many members of the houſe, who knew well enough how that fooliſh calumny had been examined at Paris, during the king's reſidence there, when its groſsneſs and abſurdity were fully demonſtrated. Being ſenſible, therefore, that the renewal of ſuch a flagrant ſcandal would weaken their other charges, and tend to the earl's credit, they affected to reject it as being included in the Act of Indemnity.

Vote for his impeachment.

Though many of theſe charges contained the fouleſt reproaches any miniſter could be ſubjected to, yet it did not appear that they afforded ſufficient grounds for a charge of high treaſon. The earl's enemies, after examining their ſtore, pitched at laſt upon that article, in which he was charged with deluding and betraying his majeſty and the nation in all foreign treaties, and negociations relating to the late war; but it was ſaid, that thoſe general expreſſions would not be enough, except it were added, "that being a privy-councillor, he had betrayed the king's ſecret counſels to the enemy;" which lord Vaughan, ſon to the earl of Carbery, immediately calling for the paper, inſerted in the article with his own hand. The vote now paſſed for his impeachment; and Mr. Seymour was ſent up to the lords, and at their bar accuſed the earl of Clarendon of high-treaſon, and other crimes

crimes and misdemeanors, and desired that he might be sequestered from that house, and his person secured.

Refusal of the lords to commit him.

As soon as Mr. Seymour was withdrawn, a violent debate took place on a motion for committing the earl of Clarendon, some urging the propriety of a compliance with the house of commons, and citing some precedents, but very exceptionable ones, as the cases of the earl of Strafford and the like; while others asserted, that it would be of dangerous consequence to every one of the peers, if a commitment was to be ordered upon a general accusation of high treason from the commons, without any particular charge, for that then any peer, whom that house should happen to be offended with, how unjustly soever, might be removed from the body, upon any vague, or fictitious accusation. The debate continued for several hours, either side adhering obstinately to their opinion. At last, the house adjourned till next day, without putting the question.

This unwillingness of the peers to commit the chancellor gave great offence to the commons, and produced a dispute and several conferences between both houses, in which the majority of the lords still objecting to the earl's commitment, the commons at length resolved, "That the lords not having complied with the desire of the commons,

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in committing the earl of Clarendon, and ſequeſtering him from parliament, upon the impeachment of that houſe, was an obſtruction of the public juſtice of the kingdom, and a precedent of evil and dangerous conſequence." At the ſame time they appointed a committee to draw up a declaration to vindicate their proceedings.

The earl's motives for quitting the kingdom.

While this conteſt was carried on with great heat on both ſides, and to the total neglect of all public buſineſs, the earl's friends in the houſe of lords finding that many of their party deſerted them every day, and joined the faction of the court, were very urgent with the earl to quit the kingdom, as the only means of avoiding that perſecution, againſt which neither his own innocence, nor their efforts could long protect him. The king himſelf did not wiſh that the articles of impeachment ſhould undergo a public diſcuſſion, and was therefore content that intimations ſhould be given to the earl of his majeſty's deſire that he ſhould withdraw himſelf into any parts beyond the ſeas, and that if he did ſo, neither his honour nor fortune ſhould ſuffer by his abſence. Threats were alſo held out, ſometimes that the people were ſo incenſed at the obſtruction of public juſtice by the lords refuſing to commit the earl, that they intended to pull down his houſe, and the houſes of all thoſe who adhered to him; and at other times, that there were ſecret conſultations about ſending a

guard

guard of ſoldiers to ſeize and convey him to the Tower. The earl in this ſituation foreſeeing the miſchiefs that muſt ariſe from the diſagreement between the two houſes, and uncertain what the malice of his enemies might terminate in, only wanted ſome evidence of his majeſty's commands or wiſh for his departure, which he received at length in a meſſage from the duke of York, who in this unhappy conjuncture had fallen ſick, and was ſtill confined by the ſmall pox. Upon this the earl reſolved to delay no longer, but withdrew in the night of the twenty-ninth of November, leaving the following addreſs to the houſe of peers, which was delivered to them by the earl of Denbigh, as ſoon as he got advice of the unfortunate fugitive's arrival at Calais *.

His petition to the houſe of lords.

" To the right honourable the lords ſpiritual and temporal in parliament aſſembled.

" The humble petition and addreſs of Edward earl of Clarendon,

* The petition was not preſented till the third of December; for though the earl of Clarendon embarked on the twenty-ninth of November in a boat provided for him at Erith by the friendſhip of ſir John Wolſtenholme, yet the wind proved ſo unfavourable that he was three days and three nights at ſea, before he reached Calais, from which place the packet-boat being ready to depart juſt at the moment of his arrival, ſoon brought the account of his having landed there.

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" May it pleaſe your lordſhips,

" I cannot expreſs the inſupportable grief and trouble of mind I ſuſtain under the apprehenſion of being miſrepreſented to your lordſhips, and when I hear how much of your lordſhips' time hath been ſpent upon my poor concern (though it be of no leſs than of my life and fortune) and of the differences of opinion, which have already, or may probably ariſe between your lordſhips and the honourable houſe of commons, whereby the great and weighty affairs of the kingdom may be obſtructed, in a time of ſo general a diſſatisfaction.

" I am very unfortunate to find myſelf to ſuffer ſo much under two very diſadvantageous reflections, which are in no degree applicable to me; the firſt from the greatneſs of my eſtate and fortune, collected and made in ſo few years; which, if it be proportionable to what is reported, may very reaſonably cauſe my integrity to be ſuſpected; the ſecond, that I have been the ſole manager and chief miniſter in all the tranſactions of ſtate ſince the king's return into England to Auguſt laſt, and therefore that all miſcarriages and misfortunes ought to be imputed to me and my counſels.

" Concerning my eſtate, your lordſhips will not believe, that after malice and envy hath been ſo inquiſitive, and is ſo ſharp-ſighted, I will offer any thing to your lordſhips but what is exactly true; and

and I do assure your lordships, in the first place, that, excepting from the king's bounty, I have never received or taken one penny, but what was generally understood to be the just and lawful perquisites of my office, by the constant practice of the best times, which I did in my own judgment conceive to be that of my lord Coventry and my lord Ellesmere; the practice of which I constantly observed, although the office in both their times was lawfully worth double what it was to me, and I believe now is:

"That all the courtesies and favours, which I have been able to obtain from the king for other persons in church, or state, or in Westminster-hall, have never been worth to me five pounds; so that your lordships may be confident I am as innocent from corruption as from any disloyal thought; which, after near thirty years service of the crown in some difficulties and distresses, I did never suspect would be objected to me in my age:

"That I am at present indebted about three or four and twenty thousand pounds, for which I pay interest, the particulars whereof I shall be ready to offer to your lordships, and for which I have assigned lands and leases to be sold, though at present nobody will buy or sell with me; that I am so far from having money, that from the time the seal was taken from me, I have lived upon the coining

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coining ſome ſmall parcels of plate, which have ſuſtained me and my family, all my rents being with-held from me

" That my eſtate, my debts being paid, will not yield me two thouſand pounds per annum, for the ſupport of myſelf, and providing for two young children who have nothing; and that all I have is not worth what the king in his bounty hath beſtowed upon me, his majeſty having, out of his royal bounty, within few months after his coming into England, at one time beſtowed upon me twenty thouſand pounds in money, without the leaſt mention or imagination of mine; and ſhortly after another ſum of money amounting to ſix thouſand pounds, or thereabouts, out of Ireland, and which ought to have amounted to a much greater proportion, and of which I never heard, till notice was given me by the earl of Orrery, that there was ſuch a ſum of money for me: his majeſty likewiſe aſſigned me, after the firſt year of his return, an annual ſupply towards my ſupport, which did but defray my expences, the certain profits of my office not amounting to above two thouſand pounds a year, or thereabouts, and the perquiſites not very conſiderable, or very uncertain; ſo that the ſaid ſeveral ſums of money, and ſome parcels of land his majeſty beſtowed upon me, are worth more than all I have amounts to, ſo far am I from advancing my eſtate by any indirect means; and though

though the bounty of his majeſty hath very far exceeded my merit or expectation, yet ſome others have been as fortunate at leaſt by the ſame bounty, who had as ſmall pretences to it, and have no great reaſon to envy my good fortune.

" Concerning the other imputation of the credit and power of being the chief miniſter, and ſo cauſing all to be done that I had a mind to, I have no more to ſay, than that I had the good fortune to ſerve a maſter of a very great judgment and underſtanding, and to be always joined with perſons of great ability and experience, without whoſe advice and concurrence never any thing hath been done. Before his majeſty's coming into England, he was conſtantly attended by the then marquis of Ormond, the late lord Colepeper, and mr. ſecretary Nicholas, who were equally truſted with myſelf, and without whoſe joint advice and concurrence, whey they were all preſent, (as ſome of them always were) I never gave any counſel. As ſoon as it pleaſed God to bring his majeſty into England, he eſtabliſhed his privy-council, and ſhortly out of them a number of honourable perſons of great reputation, who for the moſt part are ſtill alive, as a committee for foreign affairs, and conſideration of ſuch things, as in the nature of them required much ſecrecy; and with theſe perſons he vouchſafed to join me; and I am confident this committee never tranſacted any thing of moment, his

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his majesty being always present, without presenting the same first to the council-board; and I must appeal to them concerning my carriage, and whether we were not all of one mind in all matters of importance. For more than two years I never knew any difference in the councils, or that there were any complaints in the kingdom, which I wholly impute to his majesty's great wisdom, and the entire concurrence of his council, without the vanity of assuming any thing to myself; and therefore I shall not be singly charged with any thing, that hath since fallen out amiss.

"But from the time Mr. secretary Nicholas was removed from his place, there were great alterations; and whosoever knows any thing of the court or councils, knew well how much my credit since that time hath been diminished, (though his majesty most graciously vouchsafed still to hear my advice in most of his affairs) nor hath there been, from that time to this, above one or two persons, brought into the council, or preferred to any considerable office in the court, who have been of my intimate acquaintance, or suspected to have any kindness for me, and many of them notoriously known to have been very long my enemies, and of different judgment and principles from me both in church and state, and who have taken all opportunities to lessen my credit with the king, and with all other persons, by misrepresenting and misreporting

reporting all that I ſaid, or did, and perſuading men, that I had done them ſome prejudice with his majeſty, or croſſed them in ſome of their pretences; though his majeſty's goodneſs and juſtice was ſuch, that it made little impreſſion upon him.

" In my humble opinion, the great misfortunes of the kingdom have proceeded from the war, to which it is notoriouſly known that I was always moſt averſe, and may without vanity ſay, that I did not only foreſee, but did declare the miſchiefs we ſhould run into, by entering into a war, before any alliances made with the neighbouring princes: and that it may not be imputed to his majeſty's want of care, or the negligence of his counſellors, that no ſuch alliances were entered into, I muſt take the boldneſs to ſay, that his majeſty left nothing unattempted in order thereunto; and knowing very well, that France reſolved to begin a war upon Spain, as ſoon as his catholic majeſty ſhould depart this world, which being much ſooner expected by him, they had, two winters before, been at great charge in providing plentiful magazines of all proviſions upon the frontiers, that they might be ready for the war, his majeſty uſed all poſſible means to prepare and diſpoſe the Spaniard to that apprehenſion, offering his friendſhip to that degree, as might be for the ſecurity and benefit of both crowns. But Spain, flattering itſelf with an opinion, that France would not break with them, at leaſt

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leaſt that they would not give them any cauſe by adminiſtering matter of jealouſy to them, never made any real approach towards a friendſhip with his majeſty; but both by their embaſſadors here, and to his majeſty's embaſſador at Madrid, always inſiſted, as preliminaries, upon the giving up of Dunkirk, Tangier, and Jamaica.

" Though France had an embaſſador here, to whom a project for a treaty was offered, and the lord Hollis, his majeſty's embaſſador at Paris, uſed all endeavours to promote and proſecute the ſaid treaty, yet it was quickly diſcerned that the principal deſign of France was to draw his majeſty into ſuch a nearer alliance, as might advance their deſigns, without which they had no mind to enter into the treaty propoſed: and this was the ſtate of affairs, when the war was entered into with the Dutch, from which time neither crown much conſidered their making an alliance with England.

" As I did from my ſoul abhor the entering into this war, ſo I never preſumed to give any advice, or counſel for the way of managing it, but by oppoſing many propoſitions, which ſeemed to the late lord treaſurer and myſelf to be unreaſonable, as the payment of the ſeamen by tickets, and many other particulars which added to the expence.

" My

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"My enemies took all occaſions to inveigh againſt me; and making friendſhip with others out of the council, of more licentious principles, and who knew well enough how much I diſliked and complained of the liberty they took to themſelves of reviling all counſels and counſellors, and turning all things ſerious and ſacred into ridicule, they took all ways imaginable to render me ungrateful to all ſorts of men (whom I ſhall be compelled to name in my own defence) perſuading thoſe who miſcarried in any of their deſigns, that it was the chancellor's doings, whereof I never knew any thing. However, they could not withdraw the king's favour from me, who was ſtill pleaſed to uſe my ſervice with others; nor was there ever any thing done, but upon the joint advice of at leaſt the major part of thoſe, who were conſulted with: and as his majeſty commanded my ſervice in the late treaties, ſo I never gave the leaſt advice in private, nor wrote one letter to any perſon in either of thoſe negociations, but upon the advice of the council, and after it was read in council, or at leaſt by the king himſelf, and ſome others; and if I prepared any inſtructions or memorials, it was by the king's command, and at the requeſt of the ſecretaries, who deſired my aſſiſtance: nor was it any wiſh of my own, that any embaſſador ſhould give me an account of the tranſactions, but to the ſecretary, with whom I was always ready to adviſe: nor am I conſcious to myſelf of having ever given advice

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advice that hath proved mischievous, or inconvenient to his majesty; and I have been so far from being the sole manager of affairs, that I have not in the whole last year been above twice with his majesty in any room alone, and very seldom in the two or three years preceding; and, since the parliament at Oxford, it hath been very visible, that my credit hath been very little, and that very few things have been hearkened to, which have been proposed by me, but contradicted, *eo nomine*, because proposed by me.

" I most humbly beseech your lordships to remember the office and trust I had for seven years, in which, in discharge of my duty, I was obliged to stop and obstruct many men's pretences, and to refuse to set the seal to many pardons and other grants, which would have been profitable to those who procured them, and many whereof, upon my representation to his majesty, were for ever stopt, which naturally have raised many enemies to me; and my frequent concurring with the late lord treasurer (with whom I had the honour to have a long and a fast friendship to his death) in representing several excesses and exorbitances, the yearly issues so far exceeding the revenues, provoked many persons concerned, of great power and credit, to do me all the ill offices they could; and yet I may faithfully say, that I never meddled with any part of the revenue, or the administration of it, but when I was desired by the late lord treasurer to

give

give him my assistance and advice, (having had the honour formerly to serve the crown as chancellor of the exchequer) which was for the most part in his majesty's presence, in which my opinion always concurred with the major part of the councillors who were present: all which, upon examination, will be made manifest to your lordships, how much soever my integrity is blasted by the malice of those, who, I am confident, do not believe themselves: nor have I in my life, upon all the treaties, or otherwise, received the value of one shilling from all the kings and princes in the world (except the books of the Louvre-print sent me by the chancellor of France, by that king's direction) but from my own master, to whose entire service, and to the good and welfare of my country, no man's heart was ever more devoted.

"This being my present condition, I do most humbly beseech your lordships to entertain a favourable opinion of me, and to believe me to be innocent from those foul aspersions, until the contrary shall be proved, which I am sure can never be by any man worthy to be believed: and, since the distemper of the times, and the difference between the two houses in the present debate, with the power and malice of my enemies, who gave out that I should prevail with his majesty to prorogue or dissolve this parliament in displeasure, and threaten to expose me to the rage and fury of the

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people, may make me to be looked upon as the cauſe, which obſtructs the king's ſervice, and the unity and peace of the kingdom; I moſt humbly beſeech your lordſhips, that I may not forfeit your lordſhips' favour and protection, by withdrawing myſelf from ſo powerful a perſecution, in hopes I may be able, by ſuch withdrawing, hereafter to appear and make my defence, when his majeſty's juſtice, to which I ſhall always ſubmit, may not be obſtructed, or controuled, by the power of thoſe, who have ſworn my deſtruction."

Vote for its being burnt by the common hangman.

This addreſs was no ſooner read, than thoſe who had contributed moſt to the earl's withdrawing himſelf out of the kingdom, and who were privy to the immediate cauſe of his having done ſo, affected to be much troubled, that he had eſcaped their juſtice; and moved, that orders might be forthwith ſent to ſtop the ports, that ſo he might be apprehended; when they well knew that he was landed at Calais. Others took exceptions at ſome expreſſions, which, they ſaid, reflected upon the king's honour and juſtice; and moved, that the petition might be entered in their journal-book, to the end that they might farther conſider of it; which was accordingly ordered. The lords then deſired a conference with the commons, to impart to them the earl of Clarendon's petition, and the account received of his eſcape, which removed the occaſion of their late diſpute about committing him.

him. The duke of Buckingham, who was the bearer of the meſſage to the commons, ſaid, "The lords have commanded me to deliver you this ſcandalous and ſeditious paper, ſent from the earl of Clarendon: they bid me to preſent it to you, and deſire you in convenient time to ſend it to them again, for it has a ſtyle which they are in love with, and therefore deſire to keep it."

The reading of the petition in the houſe of commons fanned the former flame of their reſentment. After ſome very bitter invectives againſt the malignity of the writer, for thus daring, as they alledged, to libel the juſtice of the nation, they voted, that the paper contained much untruth, and ſcandal, and ſedition in it, and that it ſhould be publicly burnt by the common hangman; in which vote the lords readily concurred; and the ſentence was accordingly executed with the uſual formalities by the appointed officer.

Act paſſed for the earl of Clarendon's incapacity and baniſhment.

But the vengeance of the earl's enemies was not yet ſatisfied. Some of the members of the lower houſe ſpoke loudly of a bill of attainder againſt him. As the king did not mean that the perſecution ſhould be carried to the laſt extremity, he prevailed with the duke of Buckingham and the earl of Arlington to content themſelves with a bill of incapacity and baniſhment. This was ſoon agreed to by the peers, but, in the commons, met

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with great oppoſition. They ſeemed reſolved upon rigorous juſtice, and voted, "that the king ſhould be prayed to iſſue out his proclamation for ſummoning the ſaid earl to appear by a day, and to apprehend him in order to his trial; and that the lords be ſent to for their concurrence in this vote." The lords refuſed their concurrence, becauſe the vote was contrary to their bill. Freſh diſputes were likely to ariſe; but the commons, after a little private management, were induced to give way; and retracting their former vote, on the eighteenth of December, they paſſed the bill ſent them by the lords, which received the royal aſſent by commiſſion next day; and the parliament by the king's deſire adjourned to the ſixth of February.

Seeming change in the ſyſtem of court-politics.

As all the vacancies at court, and in the principal offices of the ſtate had been long filled by the earl of Clarendon's enemies, his removal was only followed by the before-mentioned appointment of ſir Orlando Bridgman to the place of lord keeper. But though no real change was made in the directors of the king's counſels, the ſhew of ſome alteration of ſyſtem was to be kept up, for the double purpoſe of rendering the preſent miniſtry popular, and of throwing all the odium of paſt miſgovernment on the diſgraced chancellor. With this view, and by the particular advice of the duke of Buckingham, the king revoked the Canary patent, which had been complained of as an injurious monopoly; iſſued

iſſued a proclamation for enforcing the laws againſt popiſh recuſants; gave orders to the attorney-general to proceed by a *Quo Warranto* againſt the charter of the wood-mongers company, for various abuſes in the ſale of fuel; propoſed a reform in the expences of his houſehold; and in ſhort, ſeemed intent upon redreſſing every national grievance *.

Cauſe of new overtures to the Dutch.

While the affections and confidence of the people were thus courted at home by ſpecious appearances, an alliance was formed abroad, which was really deſerving of the juſteſt praiſe, and which, if it had been adhered to, would have not only promoted the intereſts of England, but the peace and ſecurity of Europe. It was a combination to check the progreſs of the French king, who, in the midſt of the treaty at Breda, had entered Flanders

* Notice was given in the gazette, that his majeſty, for the better regulating of public buſineſs, had eſtabliſhed a committee for foreign affairs, to which all juſtices of the peace, and all other his majeſty's officers and miniſters were to apply; a committee for ſuch matters as concerned the admiralty, navy, and all military affairs; a committee for trade and navigation; and a committee for complaints and grievances, under the expreſs reſtriction of not meddling with property; and to render this conſtitution more effectual, it was farther declared in his majeſty's name, that, for the future, nothing was to be reſolved in council, till the matter had been firſt examined by one or other of the committees, to which it reſpected.

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with an army of above forty thouſand men *; and whoſe conqueſts were as rapid as his march, the towns in thoſe provinces being too badly fortified, and too weakly garriſoned to impede his career. Sweden had been long jealous of the deſigns of the French king, and was therefore ready to enter into any treaty, which might preſcribe limits to his ambition. I before obſerved what advances were made to that end before the cloſe of the war. But Holland was ſtill more immediately intereſted: Flanders was the great barrier between them and their juſtly ſuſpected ally, the ſuddenneſs of whoſe irruption filled the States with the utmoſt alarm. They complained violently of the king of France's breach of faith, who, after having promiſed that he would undertake nothing without their participation, ſcarcely gave them notice of his claims to the Low Countries, when he marched with a formidable army to enforce his unexamined, and very queſtionable pretenſions †.

Such

* He put himſelf at the head of thirty-five thouſand men, commanded by the famous Turenne; beſides two other bodies of troops, under the conduct of D'Aumont and Crequi, who with Turenne were looked upon as the greateſt generals of the age. The Spaniards, to whom the Low Countries at that time belonged, repoſing upon the faith of treaties, had made no preparations of defence; nor were they, indeed, capable of any which could have effectually reſiſted ſo powerful an invaſion.

† France and Spain had long been engaged in wars, which kept all Europe in a ſtate of perpetual agitation and diſturbance.

In

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Such a temper in the States afforded a very favourable opportunity for the renewal of the overtures indirectly made them by England before the conferences began to Breda. But his majesty at that time was full of resentment at the French king's perfidy; and the warmth of his indignation had since considerably abated. In truth, an attachment to France was somewhat like a disease in his majesty's constitution, which though it admitted of some temporary palliatives, could never be effectually cured, but left him liable to frequent relapses. Too many of his council were still more careless of the danger, to which Europe was exposed by the pro-

In order, as was then thought, to reconcile such unhappy differences, a family alliance was proposed and concluded between the two courts. Lewis the XIVth married the Spanish Infanta; and by the treaty of the Pyrenees renounced in the most positive and unequivocal manner all claims on account of his wife to every part of the Spanish dominions. But now, on the death of his father-in-law, the king of Spain, he retracted that renunciation, and pretended that natural rights, depending on blood and succession, could not be annihilated by any extorted deed, or contract.

By the custom of some parts of Brabant, a female of the first marriage, in private succession, is preferred to a male of the second; and as the queen of France stood in this predicament, in regard to seniority of birth, Lewis inferred, that, though the late king of Spain had left an infant son, his queen had a right to this important duchy. The same rule also, by which he had acquitted himself of the restraints laid on him by the act of renunciation, in the case of Brabant, extended to every part of the Spanish dominions; and the only barrier which remained to his claims on that extensive empire was the life of a sickly infant.

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greſs of the French arms; and it is likely that England might have continued for ſome time longer an indifferent ſpectator of the conqueſt of Flanders, if the duke of Buckingham and ſir William Coventry had not perſuaded the king, that his ſpirited interpoſition at ſuch a moment of univerſal alarm would wipe off all the diſgraces of the late war; would give his majeſty freſh conſequence in the ſcale of Europe; would retaliate the intrigues and imperiouſneſs of France; would flatter the pride and prejudices both of his parliament and his people; and would make the one readily grant, and the others as chearfully pay whatever ſupplies his majeſty ſhould have occaſion to demand. Upon theſe ſuggeſtions, it was reſolved in council to make ſuch propoſals to the Dutch, as they were not likely to refuſe at the preſent criſis; and the conduct of the treaty was committed to ſir William Temple, of whoſe character and abilities it is neceſſary in this place to give ſome account.

Character and negociations of ſir William Temple.

This gentleman was the ſon of ſir John Temple, a maſter of the rolls in Ireland in the late king's reign. He was a member of the Iriſh convention at the reſtoration of his preſent majeſty; and being re-elected to ſerve in the ſubſequent parliament, was deputed by them, as one of their commiſſioners in 1662, to wait upon his majeſty, and to repreſent the great diſtreſs and confuſion that country was in for want of ſome ſatisfactory ſettlement.

ment. During his attendance at court, his talents and induſtry recommended him to the notice of the chancellor, and of the duke of Buckingham; but the latter more particularly cultivated his friendſhip. He knew the value of ſuch a partiſan, and neglected no means of ſecuring his attachment. When the preliminaries of the bargain with the biſhop of Munſter, were ſigned by his agent in London, Mr. Temple was ſent over to have them ratified; and there being ſome likelihood, that his ſervices abroad might be farther wanted, he was ordered, after the concluſion of the treaty with the biſhop, to go to Bruſſels, where a reſident's commiſſion, and a patent creating him a baronet were ſent him, as marks of his majeſty's approbation. At the termination of the war he received letters of recal; but, a few days after his return, he was appointed his majeſty's envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the States General. No man, indeed, could be better qualified for ſuch a commiſſion: he poſſeſſed an accurate knowledge of the political views, as well as of the real intereſts of the different ſtates of Europe; and united to a great preſence of mind in debate the farther advantage of an animated, inſinuating, and perſuaſive addreſs. He had alſo formed a perſonal acquaintance with De Witt, in a viſit incognito to Holland, while he reſided abroad. His integrity was unqueſtioned; and, indeed, he reſembled his patron

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patron in nothing, except the ſuppoſed looſeneſs of his religious principles.

Sir William, as ſoon as his orders were diſpatched, repaired with the utmoſt ſecrecy to the Hague, and loſt not a moment to communicate the great object of his embaſſy, ſtrongly urging the direct neceſſity of an offenſive league between England and Holland, as the only means of forcing back into its proper channel the power of France, which had overflown its banks, and ſeemed to bear down every thing before it with the impetuoſity of a torrent. De Witt was ſtartled at this unexpected overture; and though he knew that ſuch a junction could not fail of producing the intended effect, yet he had great reaſon to be prejudiced againſt any offers from a court, of whoſe enmity to himſelf, as well as to his country, he had ſo many recent proofs. Nor did the penſionary diſſemble his ſentiments on this head: he told ſir William, "that the meaſure he propoſed was too bold, and too precipitate, to be agreed to by the States, who, till matters came to extremities, could never deem it prudent to abandon an old ally, and rely entirely on a treaty with England, which had lately waged ſo cruel a war againſt them." He added, "that ever ſince the reign of Elizabeth, there had been ſuch a fluctuation in the Engliſh councils, that it was not poſſible, for two years together, to take any

any ſure or certain meaſures with that kingdom; and though the preſent miniſtry, having entered into views which were conformable to national intereſt, promiſed a greater firmneſs and conſtancy, yet it might ſtill be unſafe, in a buſineſs of ſuch an importance, to put an entire confidence in them."

Extraordinary exertions to effect the ſpeedy ratification of the Triple Alliance.

Upon this declaration on the part of De Witt, which he rigidly adhered to, while he admitted the neceſſity of ſome other expedient, a treaty of defenſive alliance was entered upon, and finiſhed with a degree of diſpatch unprecedented in Dutch negociations. The penſionary, when he had received the firſt advice of the king of France's march into Flanders, not only expoſtulated with D'Eſtrades upon ſuch a breach of promiſe to the States, but wrote a very ſtrong remonſtrance to the king himſelf on his uncandid and violent proceedings. Lewis by this time had made conſiderable progreſs; but dreading a combination againſt him, if he graſped at all the Spaniſh dominions in the Low Countries, he offered to renounce all farther claims, in right of his queen, on condition of either retaining the conqueſts he had already made, or of having irrevocably transferred to him the duchy of Luxemburgh, or the ſovereignty of Franche Comte, with Cambray, Douay, Aire, St. Omer's, and two or three other places. De Witt thought this propoſal preferable to a war; and after a few conferences with ſir William Temple on the ſubject,

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ſubject, and ſome extraordinary exertions to obtain not only the conſent, but the ratification of the States General, without conſulting their conſtituents, the alliance between England and Holland was concluded in five days after the firſt overture*.

This maſterpiece of political negociation was ſubdivided into three treaties, or rather three diſtinct agreements united in one treaty by their neceſſary connection, as dictated by the the ſame ſpirit, tending to the ſame end, and confirmed with the ſame validity. The firſt contained the articles of a defenſive alliance between England and the States General, by which either party engaged to aſſiſt the other with certain ſtipulated ſuccours, in

* By the conſtitution of the Dutch republic, not only all the provinces, but every city in each province muſt conſent to the enacting of every law, and the ratification of every treaty. The ſhorteſt period of time, therefore, in which this buſineſs could be diſpatched, was two months, and it was much to be dreaded, that by the influence of French gold the paſſing the treaty would be obſtructed in ſome of the ſmaller cities. D'Eſtrade, the French embaſſador, treated the league ſo lightly as to ſay in contempt, that it would be time enough to ſpeak to it in ſix weeks. However, De Witt was determined to be before-hand with the embaſſador, and riſked his own ſafety to preſerve the commonwealth: by his authority and example he prevailed with the States General to ſign and ratify the league, though it was declared by them all, that if it diſpleaſed their conſtituents, they riſked their heads for the irregularity.

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caſe of being attacked by any enemy; and this alliance was to be perpetual. By the ſecond, it was agreed, that the contracting parties ſhould join their endeavours to diſpoſe the king of France to make peace in the Low Countries upon the conditions offered, and Spain to make choice of one or the other ſide of the alternative, before the end of May, with full ſecurity of having the remainder of the Netherlands guarantied to that crown by the mediating powers; but in caſe of any difficulty on the part of Spain, they were to induce the king of France not to proſecute his claim by force of arms, but leave it wholly to the allies, to procure the ends propoſed in this league. In the third, they engaged, that in caſe any difficulties ſhould ariſe concerning the renunciation, care ſhould be taken ſo to ſettle the articles of peace between France and Spain, as to create no prejudice to the rights of either; but if one ſide only ſhould reject this expedient, then the allies ſhould proceed againſt the refuſer; and if the king of France ſhould recede from the alternative he himſelf had propoſed, the conditions of which were ſpecified in the ſecond treaty, and ſhould make farther progreſs in Flanders, then the allies ſhould join with Spain, and make war upon the king of France, till they ſhould compel him to comply with the terms of the Pyrenean treaty. The allies alſo agreed to uſe their endeavours to eſtabliſh peace between Spain and Portugal; and though they did not

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not pretend to hinder the king of France from giving any aid to Portugal, they engaged to prevent, as far as lay in their power, his aſſiſting that nation by making war in the Netherlands. All theſe articles were to be ratified within four weeks *.

A third power ſoon entered into all the conditions of this alliance. The Swediſh embaſſador at the Hague engaged that his maſter ſhould accede to the treaty, if a place was left for him as a principal; which being done, the king of Sweden's ratification was received in a little time; and the triple knot ſeemed to be tied with indiſſoluble firmneſs.

Secret indignation of the French king at this treaty.

Both the crowns, whoſe diſſenſions had given riſe to this alliance, were almoſt equally diſſatisfied with it. The king of France, though the alternative had been firſt propoſed by himſelf, was greatly mortified to think, that what he wiſhed to appear as a voluntary act, and the effect of his great moderation, ſhould now be preſcribed to him as it were by force, and in the form of an imperious mandate. He could hardly ſuppreſs his indignation at ſeeing ſuch a little ſtate as Holland preſume to be the arbiter of kings. There is no doubt but he would have employed his uſual artifice, his pro-

* The Triple Alliance was ſigned on the twenty-third of January.

miſes,

miſes, and his bribes at the Engliſh court to prevent a circumſtance ſo humiliating to his pride, had he timely notice of the negociation. But the alliance was concluded almoſt as ſoon as he heard that it was begun *, ſo that finding his efforts to obſtruct it were too late, he concealed his diſpleaſure; and, by his eaſy compliance with the terms, endeavoured to betray Holland into a ſtate of unſuſpecting ſecurity.

* We meet with the following remarkable paſſage in a letter from monſieur de Lionne to the count D'Eſtrade, three days before the Triple Alliance was ſigned: "We agree with you here in the truth of what you write, that there are ſecret endeavours to engage the States in a league for the defence of the Low Countries; but the king knows, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, that whatever the Engliſh will ſay on this occaſion, reſults only from their jealouſy and fear, that the States ſhould enter into ſtricter alliances with his majeſty; and perhaps to engage into meaſures which may entirely diſoblige France; and I may add, that if the negociation of this league ſhould advance at London, in ſuch a manner as to render the king apprehenſive of the concluſion of it, he has in readineſs ſome ſure method to ſtop it almoſt at once, and, at the ſame time, do the Engliſh the greateſt pleaſure in the world. I cannot explain myſelf further, but monſieur De Witt has too much penetration not eaſily to know and judge that what I ſay is true." Though the ſecrecy and extraordinary diſpatch, with which the league was concluded, put it out of the king of France's power to employ his *ſure method of ſtopping it*, he ſoon found the ſame means equally effectual in breaking it. Charles was perſuaded, without much difficulty, to untie the triple knot, and undo the only act in all his engagements with foreign powers, which ſeemed deſerving of applauſe.

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Reluctant assent of the Spanish ministry.

The Spanish ministry were much more unreserved in the avowal of their dissatisfaction: they looked upon the claims of the French king as founded in the most flagrant injustice, and deriving their only validity from the sword. They acknowledged themselves under no obligation to the Dutch for an interference, which evidently proceeded from a regard to their own security; nor did they thank the other powers for wishing to satiate the rapacity of France by the sacrifice of so considerable a part of the Spanish provinces. While they hesitated therefore to accept of the alternative offered them, and seemed rather willing to abandon the whole, than to be unjustly deprived of a part, the king of France invaded Franche Comté, and in about ten or twelve days made himself master of the whole province. At last when the court of Madrid found that neither England nor the States could be induced to take a decisive part in their favour, while France acceded to the terms, they sent orders to their governor in Flanders to chuse the first condition of the alternative, by which France was to retain all the conquests she had made when the alternative was proposed, and which of course did not include Franche Comté. This unexpected choice, by which Spain gave up so many places almost in the heart of her provinces, was made with a view of engaging both Holland and England in a stricter union for the defence of

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the reſt. No farther obſtacle remaining to the negociation of a peace, it was ſoon concluded by the plenipotentiaries of the different powers, who met at Aix-la-chapelle *. France reſtored Franche Comté, but was confirmed in the poſſeſſion of its other conqueſts, after formally renouncing every farther claim. The obſervance of the articles was guarantied by England, Holland, and Sweden, who were alſo allowed to ſolicit the acceſſion of any other princes and ſtates that might be inclined to join them in the ſame engagement.

Some time before the Triple Alliance produced the deſired effect, with regard to France and Spain, a treaty was concluded between the latter and Portugal, by the mediation, and under the guarantee of England. By this treaty Portugal, after a long ſtruggle to ſhake off the Spaniſh yoke, was declared to be free and independent; and the right of ſucceſſion to that crown was confirmed to the Braganza family †. Thus, in the courſe of a few months,

* The conferences at Aix laſted but for a fortnight, and the treaty was acceded to by all parties and ſigned on the ſecond of May.

† Portugal was annexed to the crown of Spain, or rather was reduced to a ſtate of the moſt abject vaſſalage by Philip II. in 1580. The viceroys under that tyrant and his immediate ſucceſſors purſued ſuch a ſyſtem of rapacity and oppreſſion as at length excited a revolt at Liſbon on the firſt of December, 1640, when the people almoſt forced John, duke of Braganza, the legi-

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months, the differences of all the belligerent ſtates were ſeemingly compoſed, and the tranquility of Europe provided for by the faith of the moſt ſolemn treaties, and the expected vigilance of a powerful confederacy.

New counſels adopted in favour of the non-conformiſts.

In the midſt of theſe very honourable and politic endeavours to promote univerſal peace, the parliament met, according to their adjournment, on the tenth of February; and both the king and his miniſters had ſome right to expect the warmeſt congratulations on the ſucceſs of the overtures made to the Dutch, and a chearful grant of ſupplies to fulfil the conditions of that treaty. But the friends of the exiled chancellor, and ſome miſguided zealots had not been idle during the receſs. They induſtriouſly circulated reports, that the earl was removed only to divert public vengeance from its proper objects, the principal directors of the late diſgraceful and calamitous war; and to open the way for the re-eſtabliſhment of preſbyterians on a footing of perfect equality. This latter aſſertion was not only the more readily believed, but excited the greater jealouſy and alarm, as the miniſtry had actually taken ſome ſteps towards that end, and had even engaged a few of the moſt moderate di-

timate heir, to aſſert his own right, and the independency of his country. Both were confirmed, in the reign of Alphonſo his ſucceſſor, by the above treaty.

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vines of the eſtabliſhed church * to aſſiſt them in preparing ſuch a plan of comprehenſion. I muſt, before I proceed any farther, explain the cauſe of this temporary change in the apparent deſigns of the court.

In a former part of theſe remarks †, it has been obſerved, that when the duke of Buckingham headed the cabal in oppoſition to government, he kept up an intimate correſpondence with many perſons of the greateſt weight among the non-conformiſts, and declared himſelf a ſtrong friend to their principles, and a warm advocate for liberty of conſcience. Theſe profeſſions were only made with a view of increaſing his popularity and his party; for ſo far from being inclined to favour this or that particular ſect through any belief in their tenets, all ſenſe of religion was totally extinguiſhed in his mind by long habits of debauchery and profaneneſs. Upon his reſtoration to royal favour, and his taking the lead in public meaſures, he did not think it ſafe to ſhake off his old friends, nor flatly to contradict his former aſſurances. He therefore reſolved to ſecure the confidence of ſo large a body of men, whoſe intereſt might give ad-

* Among theſe were Tillotſon and Stillingfleet, clergymen highly eſteemed for their learning, their talents, and their moderation.

† See page 263.

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ditional ſtability to his power. He prevailed with the king to adopt his notions for a little time; and had even the addreſs to perſuade the friends of the papiſts, that the propoſed lenity to proteſtant diſſenters would ultimately prove more ſerviceable to the Roman catholics, and reconcile the people to greater condeſcenſions in their favour, than the ſyſtem of intolerance hitherto purſued.

Oppoſition of the commons.

But though the duke had carried his point in the cabinet, and flattered himſelf with the hope of gaining the acquieſcence of both houſes, yet the loud clamours of the church party, and the premature triumph of the diſſenters themſelves excited in parliament a ſpirit of the moſt determined oppoſition. On the very morning of their re-aſſembling, and before the king went to the houſe, the commons gave a ſufficient ſpecimen of their intentions by voting, that ſuch of the members, as were of the privy-council, ſhould attend his majeſty with a requeſt, in the name of the houſe, "that he would iſſue out a proclamation, for the putting in preſent execution the laws in force concerning religion and church-government, now eſtabliſhed according to the Act of Uniformity." Nor could all the efforts of the court party obtain even the delay of this vote, till the houſe ſhould be informed of his majeſty's ſentiments on the ſubject from his own lips.

After

After passing this vote, the attendance of the commons was required by the king in the house of peers, where he communicated to his parliament the pleasing news of his having made a defensive league with the States of the United Provinces, and another for an efficacious mediation of peace between France and Spain, into which the king of Sweden had, by his embassador, offered to enter as a principal. His majesty next availed himself of the present posture of his neighbours, and of the obligations he lay under, in consequence of the new alliance, to urge the necessity of a speedy supply, which might enable him to build some large ships now much wanted in the navy, to fortify the ports, and more immediately to set out a fleet for the purpose of giving weight to the proposed mediation. Having dwelt sufficiently upon these points, he added, "that for the settling a firm peace, as well at home as abroad, there was one thing more he held himself obliged to recommend to them, which was, that they would seriously think of some course, to beget a better union and composure in the minds of his protestant subjects, in matters of religion, whereby they might be induced not only to submit quietly to the government, but also faithfully give their assistance towards the support of it."

The commons did not disavow the great pleasure they felt at his majesty's gracious communica-

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tion of the alliances entered into with Holland and Sweden; but as this was connected with the demand of a ſupply, they declined taking the king's ſpeech into conſideration, and reſolved firſt to examine into all the miſcarriages during the late war, for which purpoſe they appointed a committee of inquiry. They not only affirmed the vote they had paſſed in the morning, and cauſed it to be preſented to the king in the afternoon; but they reſolved to go themſelves in a body, and to preſent an addreſs in more preciſe and pointed terms, humbly requeſting his majeſty "to iſſue out his proclamation for enforcing the laws againſt conventicles; and that care might be taken for the preſervation of the peace againſt all unlawful aſſemblies of papiſts and non-conformiſts."

As the ill temper of the commons was ſuppoſed chiefly to proceed from their jealouſies on the ſcore of religion, Buckingham adviſed the king to ſhew the utmoſt readineſs in complying with their laſt requeſt; but, at the ſame time, to give parliament an indirect hint, that he preſumed they had not loſt ſight of the plan of union, which he had recommended to their care in his ſpeech. This was done with great artifice and delicacy in the preamble, or opening of the proclamation, where his majeſty declared, "that upon information, that divers perſons, abuſing the clemency uſed to the diſſenters, *(even whilſt it was under conſideration to find*

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find out a way for the better union of his proteſtant ſubjects) had of late openly held unlawful aſſemblies and conventicles, he would by no means permit ſuch notorious contempts of himſelf and his laws to go unpuniſhed." But the commons were at preſent very little inclined to admit of any union, except what was preſcribed by the act of uniformity: the ſpirit of party was inflamed by a blind and implacable zeal; and it was thought impoſſible to ſecure the intereſts and peace of the church but by the means moſt likely to deſtroy both, indiſcriminate and unrelenting perſecution. They voted, therefore, that no man ſhould bring any bill into the houſe, relating to a comprehenſion, or toleration; and the king was ſoon after obliged to aſſent to an act for enlarging and enforcing the ſeverities of a former bill for the ſuppreſſion of conventicles.

Inquiry into the miſmanagement of the late war.

Various diſcoveries of miſconduct in the late war were every day made and reported to the lower houſe by the committee, whom they had choſen for that purpoſe. Brounker was the firſt perſon, on whom their vengeance fell for the order he gave to ſlacken ſail on board the duke of York's ſhip, which prevented the probable deſtruction of the enemy's fleet, after being ſo much ſhattered in the firſt day's engagement. They expelled him the houſe, of which he was a member, and ordered him to be impeached. They were equally ſevere

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in their animadverſions on the attempt at Berghen; on the plundering of the two Eaſt India ſhips, while the Dutch fleet paſſed by; on the want of intelligence, and dividing the fleets in the ſecond year of the war; on not ſetting out a ſufficient fleet the laſt year, and the ſeparation of thoſe ſhips that were out, ſo that they became uſeleſs; on the payment of the ſeamen by tickets; on the want of proviſion and ammunition in the fleet, and in the forts; and on the laſt diſgraceful loſs ſuſtained at Chatham, for which commiſſioner Pell underwent, like Brounker, the infamy of expulſion.

Appointment of commiſſioners of accounts.

Commiſſioners of accounts were alſo appointed this ſeſſion to examine into the expenditure of all the money voted for the ſupport of the war. They applied themſelves with great fidelity to the diſcharge of that important truſt, but had not an opportunity of making their report on the ſubject till near the end of October in the following year, as the parliament did not meet again till then. The earneſtneſs of the commons, however, was not abated by that delay; and finding, among other very exceptionable articles, that immenſe ſums had been iſſued out of the exchequer, by authority of the privy ſeal, to ſir George Carteret, treaſurer of the navy, without ſpecifying the particular uſes to which that money was applied, they began with expelling him the houſe, and would have then taken other meaſures againſt him, had not the king,

king, by a compliance with whoſe orders ſir George had incurred ſuch ſeverities, immediately prorogued the parliament, and thereby put a ſudden ſtop to all farther proceedings.

Impatience of miniſtry for the money-bill.

During the agitation of ſo many complaints and grievances, the king ſent repeated meſſages to expreſs his impatience at the delay of the money-bill, and to remind the commons of the obligation he was under to ſet out a fleet, in conſequence of the late treaty. His own wants were, as uſual, very urgent: his ordinary revenues had not yet recovered from the ſhock given them by the plague, by the dreadful fire, and by the interruption of trade during the war. He and his miniſters were alſo apprehenſive, that if the differences between France and Spain ſhould happen to be ſettled, before the ſupplies were voted, the commons would be much more niggardly in their grant, as there would in that caſe remain no pretence for any naval armament. Every endeavour was therefore uſed to preſs this buſineſs upon the attention of the houſe, and to engage them to prepare for an adjournment againſt the beginning of May; but a new incident fell out to retard a little the celerity of their progreſs.

Violent conteſt between both houſes on a point of judicature.

One Mr. Skinner, a merchant of London, having grievous matter of complaint againſt the Eaſt India company for ſeizing a ſhip and cargo of his, and

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and aſſaulting his perſon, did not think proper to ſeek redreſs in the uſual manner by commencing a ſuit in Weſtminſter Hall, but brought the buſineſs directly before the houſe of lords, by way of petition. They examined his complaint, and awarded him five thouſand pounds damages. Sir Samuel Bernardiſton, as governor of the Eaſt India company, made an appeal in their behalf to the houſe of commons, who voted Skinner's complaint and the proceedings of the lords thereon illegal, and ordered Skinner himſelf to be taken into cuſtody by the ſerjeant at arms. The lords fired with reſentment, iſſued a ſimilar order for the commitment of ſir Samuel, and other Eaſt India directors, and declared their appeal to the commons to be ſcandalous. Several conferences took place between both houſes, but ſerved only to widen the breach, the lords vindicating their right to ſuch an exerciſe of judicial authority, and the commons as poſitively aſſerting it to be unprecedented, unconſtitutional, and illegal. The commons followed up their former reſolution by a ſecond vote, "that whoever ſhould be aiding, or aſſiſting in putting in execution the order or ſentence of the houſe of lords, in the caſe of Thomas Skinner againſt the Eaſt India company, ſhould be deemed a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the commons of England, and an infringer of the privileges of the houſe of commons."

In

CHAP. IV.

1668.

In the pauſes of this violent quarrel, time was found to carry, through the neceſſary ſtages, the bill for a ſupply to his majeſty of three hundred and ten thouſand pounds, to be raiſed by an impoſition on wines and other liquors. The king going to the houſe on the fourth of May, gave his aſſent to this bill, and adjourned the parliament till the eleventh of Auguſt; though, as I before intimated, they did not meet again till the latter end of the next year, being adjourned a ſecond time to the firſt of March, and then prorogued to the nineteenth of October, 1669. The diſpute between the two houſes on Skinner's affair was afterwards reſumed with equal warmth and equal obſtinacy on both ſides; nor was the queſtion of right or privilege at laſt decided. The king interfered, and at his inſtance, both houſes conſented to raze the whole proceedings out of their reſpective journals.

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SUPPLEMENT

SUPPLEMENT

TO

THE SECRET HISTORY.

THE author of the Secret Hiſtory has ſo clearly laid open to us the ruling paſſions, and the pernicious deſigns of Charles and his brother, that, though our curioſity muſt be greatly diſappointed by the diſcontinuance of his accurate information, yet no additional details could throw any new light on characters, with whom we are already made ſo well acquainted. The conduct of the king during the remainder of his reign, and the meaſures purſued by his ſucceſſor, are but natural and almoſt neceſſary conſequences of the principles, by which we find they were both governed from the very moment of the Reſtoration. Our purpoſe therefore, in writing a Supplement, is by no means to trace with painful minuteneſs the farther proceedings of ſuch deteſtable monſters, but to fix upon thoſe protuberances of their depravity, which ſeem to ſwell out from the vicious

vicious maſs, as if to force themſelves upon our notice, and to excite our peculiar abhorrence.

The firſt of thoſe diſgraceful acts is the ſecret treaty entered into with France towards the cloſe of the year 1669, a treaty unparalleled in the hiſtory of nations, by which one tyrant, immerſed in ſenſuality, betrayed to another, more guided by ambition, the intereſts of his own kingdom, and the principal ſecurity of ſurrounding ſtates. This was not effected by the intrigues of France: Charles was too forward a proſtitute to wait for the offers of a ſeducer: he himſelf made the firſt advances; and expreſſed the moſt teazing impatience till the infamous bargain was concluded. He began by tampering with the French embaſſador; but being afraid of communicating his ſentiments too freely, if the French monarch ſhould not like his propoſals, he had recourſe to his ſiſter, the ducheſs of Orleans, whoſe wit, beauty, and talents for intrigue gave her at that time conſiderable influence in the court of France *. Through her the

* In his correſpondence with his ſiſter at this time, Charles compliments her highly on her diſcretion and zeal to unite both crowns: he aſſures her, it would be the king of France's fault, if the treaty was not concluded; and expreſſes his hatred and contempt of the Dutch in the moſt indelicate terms. "You know," he ſays in one of his letters, "the old ſaying in England, the more a t—d is ſtirred, the more it ſtinks, and I do not care a t—d for any thing a Dutchman ſays of me; and ſo I think you have

the negociation was entered upon; and all diffidence being removed, truſty embaſſadors were ſent to both courts, that the terms might be adjuſted with the greater diſpatch, and with the profoundeſt ſecrecy *.

Lord Arundel of Wardour, a declared papiſt, was the perſon appointed to go to Paris, with full inſtructions; and none of the miniſtry or council were admitted into the ſecret, but Arlington, Clifford, and ſir Richard Bealing, who were all Roman catholics. The draught of the propoſed treaty is ſaid to be Bealing's compoſition, and was delivered by him to Colbert, the French embaſſador, on the eighteenth of December 1669. The preamble, beſides the uſual cant of perpetual friendſhip and union, contains two very curious aſſertions, viz. that it ſhould be beyond the power of any thing in the world to diſturb this peace, and

have enough upon this dirty ſubject, which nothing but a ſtinking Dutchman could have been the cauſe of." This is not the only ſpecimen ſtill upon record to convince us, that Charles's language to his familiar friends was always as filthy as his ſentiments were debaſed, and his conduct infamous.

* It was Charles's intention to have intruſted the whole management of the buſineſs to his ſiſter, without the intervention of embaſſadors; but her pregnancy prevented her coming to England for that purpoſe. " I muſt confeſs," he tells her in another of his letters, " I was not very glad to hear you were with child, becauſe I had a thought by your making a journey hither, all things might have been adjuſted without any ſuſpicion."

that

that the articles it contained implied ſuch a degree of mutual confidence, and were of ſuch advantage to the contracting parties, that it would be hardly poſſible to find an inſtance of a more important treaty, agreed upon and ratified in any age. But men void of honour and honeſty are incapable of any laſting friendſhip: as their union is cemented only by the intereſt of the moment, it carries in itſelf the principles of its own diſſolution. As to the extraordinary importance, or rather the unparalleled infamy of the bargain, the reader will judge of it after the peruſal of the articles:

Art. I. The king of Great Britain being convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, and reſolved to declare himſelf a catholic, and to reconcile himſelf to the church of Rome, thinks the aſſiſtance of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty may be neceſſary to facilitate the execution of his deſign: it is therefore agreed and concluded upon, that his moſt Chriſtian majeſty ſhall ſupply the king of England, before the ſaid declaration, with the ſum of two hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, one half to be paid in three months after the ratification of the preſent treaty, and the other half in three months more: and farther that his moſt Chriſtian majeſty ſhall aſſiſt the king of England with troops and money, as there may be occaſion, in caſe the ſaid king's ſubjects ſhould not acquieſce in the ſaid declaration, and rebel againſt his ſaid Britannic majeſty

majeſty (which is not thought likely:) and to the end that the ſaid declaration may have the wiſhed-for ſucceſs, and be executed with the greater ſafety, it is alſo agreed, that the day for executing this deſign ſhall be entirely at the option of the king of England."

When Lewis read this firſt article, both he and his miniſters were probably aſhamed of the groſs indelicacy in the terms of the bargain, as if the money was a bribe for Charles's declaring himſelf a papiſt. The language was therefore ſoftened in the following manner; and the ſum of two millions of livres was inſerted, inſtead of two hundred thouſand pounds:

"The king of Great Britain, being convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, is reſolved to reconcile himſelf to the church of Rome, as ſoon as the good poſture of affairs in his kingdom will permit him; and though he has every reaſon to hope, and to promiſe himſelf, that even thoſe, upon whom God may not yet have poured down his grace in ſuch abundance as to diſpoſe them, after ſo auguſt an example, to become converts, will not fail in the inviolable obedience, which all people, though of a different religion, owe to their ſovereigns; nevertheleſs, as there are often found in large ſtates reſtleſs and turbulent ſpirits, who ſtrive to diſturb the public peace, particularly when

they have ſo plauſible a pretext as that of religion, his Britannic majeſty, who has nothing more at heart, after having given peace to his own conſcience, than to confirm that which the mildneſs of his government has procured to his ſubjects, believes that the beſt means to prevent its being altered, would be the certainty, in caſe of any diſturbance, of the aſſiſtance of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty, who, deſirous of giving the king of Great Britain, upon this occaſion, effectual proofs of his friendſhip, and of his wiſh to contribute to the ſucceſs of a deſign ſo advantageous to his Britannic majeſty, and even to the whole catholic religion, hath promiſed, and doth hereby promiſe to ſupply the ſaid king of Great Britain with the ſum of two millions of livres, one half to be paid, &c."

" II. It hath been likewiſe agreed between the moſt Chriſtian king and his Britannic majeſty, that the ſaid moſt Chriſtian king ſhall not break, nor ever infringe the peace, which he hath made with Spain, nor violate in any particular his promiſes in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and conſequently, that the king of Great Britain ſhall be permitted to maintain the ſaid treaty, conformably to the conditions of the Triple Alliance, and the engagements which depend thereon."

The abſurdity of this article, which is deſtroyed by the one immediately following it, ſerves only to expoſe

expoſe Charles's weak attempt to conceal ſome part of his own baſeneſs in this contract.

" If any new rights or claims on the Spaniſh monarchy ſhould hereafter fall to the moſt Chriſtian king, it has been agreed between the king of Great Britain and the moſt Chriſtian king, that the ſaid king of Great Britain ſhall aſſiſt the ſaid moſt Chriſtian king with all his forces, as well by ſea as land, to facilitate the acquiſition of the ſaid rights; the whole at the expence of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty; and in order to obviate all diſputes that may ariſe in adjuſting the accounts of the ſaid troops, it is ſettled and agreed upon between the ſaid ſovereign lords, that the levying and tranſporting of all the land forces, which the moſt Chriſtian king ſhall want, or may require, ſhall be at the expence of the ſaid moſt Chriſtian king; and this preſent treaty being concluded, particular articles ſhall be entered into, as well concerning the pay and ſubſiſtence of the ſaid land forces, as to regulate the manner and conditions upon which they are to ſerve: but as a calculation cannot be ſo well made of the expences of a naval armament, ſubject to ſo many accidents, and compoſed of ſo many parts, and it being at the ſame time neceſſary to reduce the whole to one head, it is agreed, that the naval forces which ſhall be employed, as above mentioned, in the ſervice of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty, ſhall be paid by the ſaid moſt Chriſtian king,

at the rate of three pounds, ſixteen ſhillings a man per month, including the pay of all officers and ſailors, proviſion, ammunition, rigging, refitting, and loſs of ſhips during the war, and this from the time that the ſaid troops ſhall be raiſed till they are diſcharged, reckoning twenty-eight days to a month; and, upon theſe conditions, ſuch a number of ſhips of ſuch force as his moſt Chriſtian majeſty ſhall judge neceſſary for his ſervice ſhall be furniſhed within the time appointed for that purpoſe: and as it may happen that this aſſiſtance ſhall be required to bring under obedience to his moſt Chriſtian majeſty ſome diſtant provinces and places bordering on the Mediterranean, which are at preſent under ſubjection to the Spaniards, and that it may be inconvenient, or even impoſſible for his Britannic majeſty's fleets to keep the ſea, without ſome ports and harbours of their own, where they may put in from time to time to careen, to get proviſions and ammunition, and to have ſtorehouſes, as well as proper places to refit, it has been agreed between the ſaid ſovereign lords, that the king of Great Britain ſhall for ever have for himſelf, his heirs, and ſucceſſors, the iſland of Minorca; as alſo for the better accommodation of his land and ſea forces, ſhall have for himſelf, his heirs, and ſucceſſors, the port and town of Oſtend in the Low Countries, with ſuch an extent of territory round, as ſhall be deemed capable of paying contributions enough for the maintenance of a proper

garriſon

garriſon there; and in order to take the ſaid places, and put them into the hands of his Britannic majeſty, the moſt Chriſtian king ſhall uſe the ſame efforts, and employ as many troops as to acquire places, the poſſeſſion of which is to be veſted in himſelf: moreover, his moſt Chriſtian majeſty promiſes and engages, as well in his own name as that of the moſt Chriſtian queen, his heirs, ſucceſſors, and aſſigns (the aforeſaid claims on the Spaniſh monarchy having devolved to him) to aſſiſt the king of Great Britain to make himſelf maſter of the countries and places in America, which are at preſent ſubject to Spain, and to do every thing in his power to oblige the inhabitants of thoſe countries and places in America to ſubmit to the government of the ſaid king of England; and the ſaid people having ſubmitted, or being reduced to ſubmiſſion, ſhall always be accounted ſubjects of the ſaid king of Great Britain, and of his heirs and ſucceſſors: it is alſo agreed and concluded, that neither of the ſaid ſovereigns ſhall make peace, without the conſent and approbation of the other, with any prince or ſtate whatever, who ſhall oppoſe the rights or juſt titles, that may devolve to the ſaid moſt Chriſtian king, as is before mentioned."

" IV. It is likewiſe agreed between the ſaid ſovereigns, that they ſhall make war with all their forces both by ſea and land upon the States General

of the United Provinces; and that the ſaid ſovereigns ſhall declare all paſt treaties with the ſaid States null, except that already mentioned of the Triple Alliance made in conſequence of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and neither of the ſaid kings ſhall make peace with them, without the knowledge and conſent of the other: all commerce between the ſubjects of the ſaid kings and of the ſaid States ſhall be prohibited; and if the ſubjects of either of the ſaid kings trade with the ſubjects of the ſaid States, the ſhips and goods of ſuch ſubjects ſo trading ſhall be liable to be ſeized by the ſubjects of the other king, and ſhall be deemed lawful prize; and if, after the declaration of war, the ſubjects of either of the ſaid kings ſhall enliſt in the ſervice of the States, and be made priſoners, they ſhall be put to death by the king, whoſe ſubjects ſhall have taken them: [And foraſmuch as the ſenate and republic of Hamburgh are bound by the ties of intereſt to the States General, and experience having ſhewn that the ſaid republic will always aſſiſt the ſaid States underhand, it is agreed and concluded, that war ſhould be alſo declared at the ſame time by the ſaid kings upon the ſaid ſenate and republic:] and as the preparations by ſea, in order to bring the war to a happy iſſue, will be unavoidably exceſſive, and as that burthen, much more heavy than a land army, will principally fall upon his Britannic majeſty, the moſt Chriſtian king engages to pay, every year while the

war

war lasts, to the said king of Great Britain, the sum of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, by way of subsidy, to defray a part of the very great expence, which the king of Great Britain must necessarily incur in equipping all his naval force, as he intends, and obliges himself to do every year during the course of the war: half the said sum of eight hundred thousand pounds shall be paid in advance to the said king of Great Britain three months before the declaration of the said war, and the other half six months after the said declaration; and thus annually, as long as this war shall continue, one half in the beginning of each year, and the other half six months after: besides the said fleet, his Britannic majesty will always keep on foot a body of six thousand infantry, which he is to transport at his own expence; and of all the conquests which shall be made upon the States General, the king of Great Britain will be satisfied with the following places, namely, the island of Walkeron, l'Ecluse, and the island of Cassante: the manner of attack, and of continuing the war shall be settled by a regulation hereafter to be concerted: and as *the dissolution of the government of the States General, which is the principal end proposed in this war*, will necessarily be of great prejudice to the prince of Orange, the king of England's nephew; and as even some places, towns, and governments belonging to him will be found in the intended partition of the country, it is

agreed and concluded, that the ſaid kings will do every thing in their power to make the ſaid prince find his advantage in the continuation and end of this war, as ſhall be hereafter ſtipulated in ſeparate articles, ſince it is to be preſumed that the credit, which will be thereby given to the prince and his adherents, will contribute much to the ſucceſs of this war, at leaſt will ſow ſuch ſeeds of jealouſy and diviſion among the Dutch, that the conqueſt of the country will thereby become much more eaſy."

France refuſed to declare war againſt Hamburgh; and inſtead of eight hundred thouſand pounds, only engaged to pay Charles a ſubſidy of three millions of livres annually during the war.

" V. It is alſo agreed, that before the declaration of this war, the ſaid ſovereigns ſhall uſe their utmoſt efforts, jointly, or ſeparately, as occaſion may require, to perſuade the kings of Sweden and Denmark, or one of them, to enter into this war againſt the States General, at leaſt to oblige them to remain neuter: and they will endeavour in the ſame manner to draw into theſe meaſures the electors of Cologne and Brandenburg, the houſe of Brunſwick, the duke of Newburg, and the biſhop of Munſter: the ſaid kings will alſo do their utmoſt to perſuade even the emperor and the crown

of

of Spain not to oppoſe the conqueſt of the ſaid country."

In the execution of this laſt article, the endeavours of the royal conſpirators proved, indeed, but too ſucceſsful. The elector of Cologne and the biſhop of Munſter were immediately engaged to take an active part againſt the Dutch. Many other of the German princes were ſeduced, or intimidated into neutrality. The emperor himſelf was diſſuaded from declaring in favour of the Dutch, till they were on the very brink of ruin. A ſubſidiary treaty of four hundred thouſand crowns a year was entered into with the king of Sweden, who, on this conſideration, was to hold a body of troops in readineſs, either againſt the emperor, or the empire, if either ſhould attempt to oppoſe the arms of Lewis. In ſhort Spain was the only power, whom neither bribes nor menaces could work upon to betray the intereſts, and the liberties of Europe at this alarming criſis*. The queen regent and

* As ſoon as the agreement was ſettled between Charles and Lewis, and all the preparatory ſteps were taken for the commencement of hoſtilities, the earl of Sunderland was diſpatched to the court of Spain, to endeavour, in concert with an embaſſador from the French king, to perſuade the Spaniſh miniſtry, that they had nothing more to fear on the ſide of France. The earl was alſo to recommend very ſtrongly, in his maſter's name, a ſtrict union between the courts of Spain and France; and if, on giving a hint of the deſign againſt the Dutch, which, it

and her miniſters, to their immortal honour, inſtead of ſeeking a temporary ſafety by a mean and ruinous connivance at the deſigns of France, and England, formed a defenſive league with the States General, and proclaimed to the world their ſpirited purpoſe to reſiſt the progreſs of perfidy, injuſtice, and ambition. The court of Vienna was afterwards tempted to follow, though late, ſo glorious an example.

" VI. Theſe fundamentals being ſettled, and the king of Great Britain, after having declared himſelf a catholic, being in peace at home, he leaves to the moſt Chriſtian king the liberty of naming the time, when they ſhall make war with their united forces againſt the States General: it has been therefore agreed, and concluded, that the

it was ſaid, was only to humble, not to ſubdue them, the court of Spain ſhould ſhew any inclination to enter into a defenſive league with that diſtreſſed ſtate, then the earl was to join threats with perſuaſion, and endeavour to intimidate the Spaniſh miniſtry with an intimation, that it would produce a war with England. The French miniſter demanded, on the part of his maſter, a free paſſage through the Spaniſh territories, and to be furniſhed with forage upon paying for it, with an offer, on the one hand, by way of conſideration, to put all the late conqueſts in Flanders, in the queen of Spain's hands, till the king her ſon came of age; and, on the other, a menace that his majeſty was able to force his way, having ſixty thouſand men ready in Flanders, and twenty thouſand to make a diverſion in Catalonia. Such were the cajoleries and threats at that time ineffectually employed againſt the ſound and generous policy of the Spaniſh cabinet.

moſt

moſt Chriſtian king ſhall name the time, which ſhall appear to him moſt proper for the declaration of the ſaid war, the king of Great Britain being aſſured, that his moſt Chriſtian majeſty in naming the ſaid time, will have regard to the intereſts of the two crowns, which after the concluſion of this treaty will be common and inſeparable."

Though this article was not altered before the ſigning of the treaty, Lewis ſoon after found means to make Charles defer the intended avowal of his being a papiſt, and to begin firſt with the plunder of the Dutch.

" VII. If, upon account of this treaty, either of the ſaid kings ſhould hereafter find himſelf engaged in foreign or domeſtic wars, the one, who is not attacked, ſhall aſſiſt the other with all his forces, till the foreign war, or the rebellion ſhall be quelled.

" VIII. If in any preceding treaty made by either of the ſaid kings with any prince or ſtate whatever, there ſhould be found any clauſes contrary to thoſe, which are ſpecified in this league, the ſaid clauſes ſhall be null, and thoſe which are contained in the preſent treaty ſhall remain in full force and vigour."

While

While the negociation for this treaty was carrying on, Colbert, the French embaſſador, took a great deal of pains to divert the king from his purpoſe of making the declaration of his religion precede a war with the Dutch. The following extract from a letter to his maſter, giving an account of the converſation he had with Charles on this ſubject, will place the expectations of both parties in the cleareſt point of view:

"He told me," ſays Colbert, "he believed, that I muſt have thought, after reading his propoſals, that he and all thoſe, to whom he had intruſted the conduct of this affair, were mad to pretend to re-eſtabliſh the catholic religion in England, and that indeed every perſon, who was acquainted with the affairs of his kingdom, and the temper of his people, muſt think ſo: yet he hoped, that, with your majeſty's ſupport, this great undertaking would have a happy iſſue: that the preſbyterians and all the other ſects had a greater averſion to the church of England than to the catholics: that all the ſectaries breathed no other wiſh than for liberty of conſcience; and that provided they could obtain it, as it was his deſign they ſhould, they would not oppoſe his religion: that, beſides, he has good troops well affected to him; and that, if the late king his father had had ſo many, he would have ſtifled in their birth the troubles that cauſed his

his ruin: that he would ſtill augment as much as poſſible his regiments and companies, under the moſt ſpecious pretences he could deviſe: that all the magazines of arms are at his diſpoſal, and all well filled: that he was aſſured of the principal places in England and Scotland: that the governor of Hull was a catholic; that thoſe of Portſmouth, Plymouth, and ſeveral other places which he named to me, among the reſt Windſor, would never ſwerve from their obedience to him: that, as to the troops in Ireland, he hoped the duke of Ormond, who had great credit there, would be always faithful to him; and that though the duke, not approving this change of religion, ſhould fail in his duty, lord Orrery, who was a catholic in his heart, and who had much more influence in that army, would lead it wherever his majeſty ſhould command him: that your majeſty's friendſhip, of which he had the moſt obliging proofs in the anſwers given to his propoſals, and with which he declared himſelf perfectly ſatisfied, would be alſo of great ſervice to him. In ſhort, he told me, that he was preſſed both by his conſcience, and the confuſion which he ſaw increaſing from day to day in his kingdom, to the diminution of his authority, to declare himſelf a catholic; and that, beſides the ſpiritual advantage which he ſhould derive from it, he alſo believed it to be the only means of re-eſtabliſhing the monarchy.

"I replied,

" I replied, continues Colbert, " that it was a great and generous deſign, and that I hoped, by timing it well, it would ſucceed; that as your majeſty truſted entirely to his diſcretion for the choice of the time, I had nothing to ſay to it, unleſs he wiſhed to hear the reaſons which were ſuggeſted by my zeal alone for his ſervice, and by the knowledge I had acquired during my reſidence at his court; and as he had told me, that he ſhould be glad to take my advice in the whole courſe of this buſineſs, I ſaid, that I did not doubt but if the late king, his father, as he juſtly obſerved, had had as many troops as himſelf, he would have eaſily quaſhed the rebellion in its birth, becauſe it began only in little diſturbances, excited by court intrigues, in which the people had hardly any concern, and which gained ſtrength and vigour only from the impunity they enjoyed through the weakneſs of the royal authority, unſupported by troops; but that the troubles, which it was to be feared his declaration would cauſe, would be of quite another nature; that perhaps nine parts out of ten throughout his kingdom would feel themſelves intereſted; that, if the preſbyterians and ſectaries hated at preſent the Engliſh church more than the catholic, it was becauſe the latter was now in the loweſt ſtate of depreſſion, and more an object of pity than envy; but when they ſhould ſee it lifted up by the king's declaration, and come

to

to reflect on the diſcredit into which their ſect might fall in the courſe of time, they would probably unite with the proteſtants to oppoſe ſuch a change: that experience had too fully ſhewn, that religious motives are a fire of ſulphur and ſaltpetre, the whole maſs of which kindles in an inſtant, and is never more furious, nor more violent than at the beginning: that ſeditions muſt be expected in every part of the kingdom, and that in London a leader is never wanting to head rebellions of that kind: that I had even heard there were more than twenty thouſand men in London and its environs, who had borne arms during Cromwell's uſurpation, and who were rendered deſperate by want of employment; that there was reaſon to believe, they would all be ready, at ſuch an opportunity as this, to take up arms in ſupport of the rebellion: that though none of the troops he kept in pay, or of the faithful ſubjects he relied upon, ſhould fail him in time of need, they might perhaps be overpowered by the multitude of the rebels, even before the troops your majeſty had agreed to furniſh could arrive: that the Tower of London, which is his principal magazine of arms, was of no ſecurity, and would not perhaps hold out a ſingle day, if attacked: that it was not to be expected, that the Dutch, who muſt juſtly fear the conſequence of ſuch a declaration, would remain entirely quiet, and take no ſhare in what was going forward; but would, on the contrary, employ their treaſures and

their

their credit, to form obſtacles to the execution of a project ſo fatal to their ſtate: that, in fine, according to my opinion, his crown, and all his truſty ſervants would be very much endangered by a premature declaration; whereas, in your majeſty's propoſal to begin with a declaration of war againſt Holland, I ſaw ſuch perfect ſecurity, that one might anſwer for the ſucceſs: for, in the firſt place, I did not doubt but upon informing his parliament, that his ſtrongeſt deſire was to render the navigation and trade of England more flouriſhing than ever, and that, as the greateſt obſtacles thereto were the Dutch, who, having engroſſed in a tyrannical manner the commerce of the whole world, (ſo that ſixteen thouſand ſhips are hardly ſufficient for their traffic) refuſed giving any ſatisfaction to his juſt demands, as well on account of the freedom of trade in the Eaſt-Indies, as upon other points which reſpect the advantage of his ſubjects, he had reſolved to make war upon them, in order to bring them to reaſon; and that to this end he had taken ſuch prudent meaſures with your majeſty, that he could inſure the ſucceſs, provided his parliament would grant him only two-thirds or half the aſſiſtance they before gave him on the like occaſion; I was, I ſaid, perſuaded, that he would obtain ſuch a ſupply, as being joined to his ordinary revenues, and to the aſſiſtance in men and money ready to be given by your majeſty, would put an end to the war in a ſingle campaign, and gain

gain him all the glory, and all the advantages he could wiſh; there being moreover great likelihood, that the major part of the German princes, who are either your majeſty's friends, or his, would join againſt the Dutch, or at leaſt remain neuter, which could not be expected from the proteſtant kings and princes, if this war was preceded by his declaring himſelf a catholic, as it would give the Dutch room to make thoſe princes believe that religion was the ſole ground of the quarrel: that the States, being attacked on the ſide of the biſhopric of Munſter, and in other parts alſo by your majeſty's troops and his, would not be able to fit out a conſiderable fleet, nor to make any long reſiſtance; and that ſhould your majeſty and he think proper for your common benefit to continue this war, he might, at the end of the campaign, leave, in the places that fell to his ſhare, ſuch troops only as he could not depend upon, after declaring himſelf a catholic, and recal ſuch as were moſt devoted to his ſervice, who, being joined to all the recruits and new levies raiſed in the courſe of the campaign, under pretence of continuing the war, might enable him to maintain his change of religion: that then, there would be no reaſon to apprehend that his ſubjects, ſeeing that he was well armed both by ſea and land, and that he had your majeſty's forces at his diſpoſal, againſt all his enemies, foreign or domeſtic, and being alſo put in good humour by the ſucceſsful beginning of the

war, and by the liberty of conſcience which he was to grant them, either would, or indeed durſt make the leaſt reſiſtance to his will: that, on the contrary, by aſſembling his parliament at this conjuncture, he would probably obtain ſuch ſupplies for the continuation of the war, and ſuch acts in favour of his religion as he could wiſh: that the Dutch being declared enemies to the States, and conſequently all thoſe, who ſhould keep up any correſpondence with them, without his permiſſion, being liable to be puniſhed as traitors to their king and country, they would not find it near ſo eaſy to form, abet, and maintain a rebellion, as when, under the appearance of friendſhip, they and their emiſſaries would have full liberty to intrigue and undertake every thing.

" In fine, Sire, after having made the beſt uſe I could of all the other reaſons contained in your majeſty's memorial, this prince made anſwer, that he was not yet quite determined upon the time of making his declaration: that perhaps it would be better for your majeſty to begin a war upon Holland, in order to furniſh him with a pretence to arm, and that immediately after he might without riſk declare both his religion and war againſt the Dutch; and the firſt ſucceeding, as it probably would, he might in a month or two join his forces to thoſe of your majeſty againſt the common enemy."

Here

Here we ſee that the chief point, upon which the two courts differed, was whether Charles's declaration of his being a papiſt ſhould precede or follow the invaſion of Holland. Charles and his brother were very earneſt for the former: they dreaded the reſiſtance that was likely to be made to their favourite project, and therefore wiſhed to ſecure the utmoſt exertions of the French monarch to ſupport them in the attempt. They had alſo ſome very reaſonable ſuſpicions, that, if they began with the reduction of the United Provinces, Lewis, as ſoon as his turn was ſerved, would give himſelf very little trouble about ſettling matters in England. The king of France, on the other hand, though he held out to the royal brothers the bait of arbitrary power, and his great zeal for the catholic religion, in order to engage them to co-operate with him in his ambitious deſigns, yet was far from intending to put the iſſue of his enterprize againſt the Dutch upon ſo uncertain an event as the eſtabliſhment of popery and deſpotiſm in England. But finding that all the arguments urged by his embaſſador did not produce the deſired effect, he employed a much more perſuaſive advocate, and ſent over the ducheſs of Orleans, on the pretence of a friendly viſit, to prevail upon her brother to change his purpoſe, and to begin with the attack on the Hollanders.

Dover was the place appointed for an interview between Charles and his ſiſter, as her huſband's jealouſy would not permit her to come to London. The king of France, on the pretence of a viſit to his frontiers, and particularly to view the great works, which he had undertaken at Dunkirk, carried the queen and the whole court with him; and whilſt he remained on the oppoſite ſhore, the duchefs of Orleans croſſed over the water to Dover, where ſhe was met by Charles and his whole court. She ſo far accompliſhed the purpoſe of her embaſſy as to engage her brother to conſent to the beforementioned alterations in the firſt draught of the treaty, reſpecting the money he was to receive, and the leaving out Hamburgh in the plan of intended hoſtilities. She alſo ſhook her brother's reſolution about firſt declaring himſelf a papiſt, and, as Colbert ſays, "left him almoſt diſpoſed to enter upon the war with the Dutch, before every other thing." The treaty, however, was concluded without any expreſs engagement of this kind on Charles's part; and in a few days after the duchefs went back to France, leaving Charles, and his whole train of courtiers in a ſeeming melancholy for her departure *.

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* She did not depart, however, without leaving behind her ſome fatal marks of her viſit. "One of the preliminaries of her treaty," ſays lord Halifax, "though a trivial thing in itſelf, yet

As ſoon as this treaty was concluded, with the privity alone of the four popiſh members of the council, it became neceſſary to contrive ſome plan for

yet was conſiderable in the conſequence; as very ſmall circumſtances often are, in relation to the government of the world. About this time, a general humour, in oppoſition to France, had made us throw off their faſhion, and put on veſts, that we might look more like a diſtinct people, and not be under the ſervility of imitation, which ever pays a greater deference to the original, than is conſiſtent with the equality all independent nations ſhould pretend to. France did not like this ſmall beginning of ill humours, at leaſt of emulation; and wiſely conſidering, that it is a natural introduction, firſt to make the world their apes, that they may be afterwards their ſlaves; it was thought that one of the inſtructions Madame brought along with her, was to laugh us out of theſe veſts; which ſhe performed ſo effectually, that in a moment, like ſo many footmen who had quitted their maſters' livery, we all took it again, and returned to our old ſervice."

But the ducheſs took a ſtill more effectual ſtep to attach the Engliſh court to the intereſts, as well as to the faſhions of France. She brought over with her a beautiful French woman, Louiſe de Keroualle, who ſoon became, as was intended, the king's favourite miſtreſs, and retained her influence over him till his death. She amaſſed a great deal of money, and was honoured with two titles by the two kings to whoſe pleaſures or intereſts ſhe was ſubſervient. Charles created her ducheſs of Portſmouth; and Lewis erected the town of Aubigny into a duchy and peerdom of France, and aſſigned it to her, with remainder to ſuch of her male iſſue by the king of England, as he ſhould name. Charles Lenox, the firſt of her ſons, was created duke of Richmond, and afterwards ſucceeded her in the duchy of Aubigny alſo; and from this very pure, and unpolluted

for engaging the reſt of the miniſtry to concur in the meaſures that were to be purſued, without admitting them into the grand ſecret. Charles, therefore, pretended to Buckingham, Aſhley, and Lauderdale, that he wiſhed to enter into an alliance with France, for mutual ſupport, and to be revenged of the Dutch; and when various feigned obſtacles and difficulties were ſurmounted, a ſham treaty was concluded with their conſent and approbation, containing every article of the former treaty, except what related to the change of religion. The

ſource, one of the proudeſt families now in the kingdom derives its origin, and its tranſmiſſive honours.

The ducheſs of Orleans, the firſt mover of thoſe intrigues, did not live long to enjoy the congratulations of the French court on her ſucceſs. Soon after her return to Paris, ſhe was poiſoned in a glaſs of ſuccory water, and died in excruciating agonies. Though it was notorious that ſhe fell a victim to her huſband's jealouſy, yet Charles, on receiving the news, only ſhed a few tears, and gave Monſieur a hard name; but deſired the meſſenger not to divulge the ſecret, before a formal account was ſent from France of the ſubject. The Engliſh miniſters were directed to notify to foreign courts, that Madame did not die a violent death; and the marſhal De Bellefond, who was ſent over to remove the king's ſuſpicions, was received with ſingular marks of civility. It is not perhaps the leaſt odious feature in Charles's portrait, that neither the fulleſt proofs of his ſiſter's untimely end, nor the expreſſions of tenderneſs, uttered with her dying breath, in which ſhe declared that her only regret in leaving the world was becauſe ſhe left him, had the ſmalleſt effect on his callous feelings, to rouſe him to a returning ſenſe of national intereſt, family honour, or brotherly affection.

idea

idea of eſtabliſhing popery in England was thought to be ſo repugnant to the judgment of every ſenſible proteſtant, that thoſe three miniſters, though men of the moſt depraved minds, and the moſt daring ambition, could not be truſted with ſuch a deſign; but they were involved in all the reſt of the guilt and danger by their concurrence in ſchemes for the avowed purpoſe of deſtroying the independence of all Europe. Charles even ſuffered them to receive bribes from France for their agency in this buſineſs; and as if his confidence increaſed with their corruption, all other perſons were excluded from the cabinet council, and the moſt important concerns of the ſtate were committed to the ſole direction of Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Aſhley, and Lauderdale, who at this time were called by way of peculiar diſtinction, or reproach, the CABAL from the initial letters of their names.

Though Charles did not ſeem convinced by the French embaſſador's political arguments on the danger of prematurely declaring himſelf a papiſt, yet he could not reſiſt ſome pecuniary reaſons, which were afterwards urged with much greater effect. In the ſecond treaty, it was agreed, that the two millions of livres, which in the former ſecret bargain he was to receive for his converſion, ſhould be thrown into the firſt year's ſubſidy for the Dutch war, and that he ſhould get a million of

livres in hand. As ſoon as Charles received the money, he manifeſted no farther impatience about the avowal of his religion. It is not that he was totally indifferent on this head; but he juſtly dreaded the reſiſtance of his ſubjects. He was a coward of the firſt claſs, and that weakneſs often ſupplied in him the place of policy, or virtue *. It

* We meet with a ſingular inſtance of this tyrant's cowardice in pardoning Blood, after his attempts to aſſaſſinate the duke of Ormond, and to carry off the crown out of the Tower. Charles had a ſtrange curioſity to ſee him; and Blood, who was a very artful, as well as a daring villain, improved the opportunity. He confeſſed to the king, that he had been engaged with others in a deſign to kill him at Batterſea, where his majeſty often went to bathe; but that when he had taken his ſtand among the reeds, he found his heart checked with the awe of royalty, and he not only relented himſelf, but diverted his aſſociates from their purpoſe. Blood added, that he had long ago brought himſelf to an entire indifference about life, which he now gave up for loſt; yet he could not forbear warning the king of the danger which might attend his execution: that his aſſociates had bound themſelves by the ſtricteſt oaths, to revenge the death of any of the confederacy; and that no precaution or power could ſecure any one from the effects of their deſperate reſolutions. This threat, which would have excited very different emotions from thoſe of mercy in any man of common courage, determined the royal poltroon to ſpare the delinquent. After obtaining the conſent of the duke of Ormond, who granted it in a very gallant manner, the king gave Blood his pardon, with a penſion of five hundred a year upon the Iriſh eſtabliſhment, and even admitted him into all the privacy and intimacy of the court: whilſt poor Edwards, the keeper of the crown and regalia in the Tower, who, in his oppoſition to Blood's felonious purpoſe, had received

It ſaved his country from a civil war during his reign, and probably ſaved him from the fate, which his unfortunate father, with much leſs vice, but greater obſtinacy, incurred.

When meaſures were fully concerted for the commencement of the Dutch war, and the king had obtained two or three millions more from the penſion parliament, on the pretence of exerting himſelf in ſupport of the Triple Alliance, for the common good of Chriſtendom *, ſir William Temple, not being a proper tool for diſhonourable purpoſes,

ceived many wounds, and was now in the eightieth year of his age, reaped no reward for his valour and fidelity, but the promiſe of two hundred pounds, which he did not live to enjoy.

* The lord keeper in his ſpeech to both houſes on the neceſſity of large ſupplies to enable the king to make ſuitable preparations, ſaid, " that France and the States General were powerfully arming by ſea and land, were building new ſhips, and filling their magazines with all ſorts of warlike proviſions: that the naval ſtrength of the former was thrice as much as at the beginning of the laſt Dutch war; and that the latter had alſo been very diligent in augmenting their fleets: and that it would be therefore very unwiſe in England, while the clouds were gathering ſo thick all round, to omit, in hopes that the wind would diſperſe them, to provide againſt the ſtorm." He enlarged, at the ſame time, ſo much on the alliances entered into by his majeſty for the good of his kingdom, and to maintain which a conſiderable fleet and army were now ſo neceſſary, that the CABAL, who knew that all thoſe alliances were juſt going to be trampled under foot, were aſhamed of this ſpeech, and contrary to cuſtom, did not ſuffer it to be printed.

was

was recalled from his embaſſy at the Hague, and Downing, the old bully, ſent out, in hopes by his inſolence to provoke the States to afford ſome ſhadow of a pretence for quarreling with them. But this deſign being defeated by their cautious conduct, and by their punctual compliance with all the conditions of the peace at Breda, the CABAL had recourſe to the mean invention of ordering the captain of a yacht, which was ſent to bring over lady Temple, to ſail upon his return through the Dutch fleet, then lying on their own coaſt, and to make them ſtrike their topſails, or to fire on them, and to perſevere until they ſhould return his fire. The Dutch admiral, aſtoniſhed at ſuch a bravado, went on board the yacht, and expreſſed his willingneſs to pay all due reſpect to the Britiſh flag, according to former practice; but that a fleet on their own coaſts ſhould ſtrike to a ſingle veſſel, and that not a ſhip of war, was, he ſaid, ſuch an innovation, that he durſt not, without expreſs orders, agree to it. The admiral, after this apology, paid the compliment of ſaluting the yacht with his guns, without lowering his ſails: and the captain, thinking it equally abſurd and inhuman to ſacrifice the lives of his crew, and the life of a lady whoſe ſafety he had in charge, yielded to the unequal conteſt, and continued his courſe to England; for which neglect of orders he was committed to the Tower.

Though

Though the prudent and humane behaviour of this officer, by not perſiſting to force the Dutch to fire at his little veſſel, had deprived the king of the only plauſible ground of complaint; yet Downing, in a very imperious manner, demanded ſatisfaction for the affront, which, he ſaid, had been put on the Britiſh flag; and though the French had kept the Engliſh four years out of St. Chriſtopher's, and had done great damage to the iſland, before they gave it up, without exciting any remonſtrance from our court, yet in Downing's memorial to the States, it was repreſented as a matter of unpardonable offence, that the Dutch had not forced away, againſt their will, ſome Engliſh families which remained at Surinam. He had orders alſo not to accept of any ſatisfaction after a certain number of days; in which it was impoſſible by the ſhortneſs of the time allowed, according to the eſtabliſhed forms of the republic, to tranſact any national buſineſs. But Downing, though

"A dog in forehead, was in heart a deer:"

he was afraid to expoſe himſelf to the fury of the populace: he withdrew, without waiting for letters of recal, or taking leave; and as, in the preſervation of his perſon, he had deprived the court of another pretence to begin the war, he met with the ſame treatment, on his return to London, as the captain of the yacht, and was committed to the Tower.

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The anſwer, which Downing had refuſed to receive, was ſent over to London by an embaſſador extraordinary, who had orders to uſe every expedient which might give ſatisfaction to the court of England; but this court had not demanded ſatisfaction with any intention to receive it, and replied to the preſſing inſtances of the embaſſador, that the anſwer of the States appeared fair, yet it was ambiguous and obſcure. On the Engliſh miniſtry being aſked to ſpecify the articles, or expreſſions, which were liable to that objection, they refuſed to do it; and when the Dutch embaſſador deſired them to draw the anſwer in what terms they pleaſed, and he engaged to ſign it, they replied, "that it was not their buſineſs to draw papers for the Dutch." On this the embaſſador brought them the draught of an article, and aſked them, "whether it was ſatisfactory?" He was told, that when he had ſigned it, and delivered it, he ſhould know the mind of the miniſtry concerning it. The embaſſador, in obedience to the peremptory orders he had received from the States, to prevent a war, if poſſible, reſolved to ſign the article; and on his demanding a new audience, an hour was appointed for the purpoſe; but when he attended, the miniſtry told him, "that the ſeaſon for negociating was now paſt."

It has been before obſerved, that the king had lately obtained between two and three millions from

from parliament, a great part of which was to be applied to the fitting out an additional force at ſea, to enable his majeſty to conform to the obligations of thoſe alliances, which he had entered into for the defence of the liberties of Europe. He had alſo received a very conſiderable ſum from the king of France, to put him in a condition of breaking thoſe very alliances, and commencing a war againſt the Dutch. Yet ſo aſtoniſhing was his prodigality, that little remained for his preſent purpoſes, ſo that it was found neceſſary to uſher in the violation of foreign treaties with the violation of domeſtic faith, and the forfeiture of public credit with the pillage of the ſubject.

It had been uſual for the bankers to advance money to the king, on the ſecurity of ſome funds; by which they were reimburſed when the money was levied on the public. By ſuch loans they got eight and ſometimes ten per cent. for money which they had borrowed at ſix. In the preſent exigency of his finances, the king declared that the ſtaff of treaſurer was ready for any one, who ſhould find out an expedient to raiſe a ſum adequate to the neceſſity. Clifford propoſed ſhutting up the exchequer, and keeping all the money which had been paid into it. He obtained the promiſed reward, together with a peerage; and though the king had, by his proclamations, given his faith, that he would make good all his aſſignments till his

his debts ſhould be paid, the propoſal was carried into ſuch ſudden execution, that none but the CABAL had time to recal their caſh into their hands. A general aſtoniſhment and confuſion ſeized the public; the credit and commerce of the whole kingdom were affected: the bankers ſtopt payment as well as the exchequer; and the merchants were not able to accept or pay any bills of exchange, to carry on their trade abroad, or to clear their ſhips at the cuſtom-houſe.

In order to quiet the minds of the public, a declaration was ſet forth, in which the decay of the navy, and the immediate neceſſity of large equipments to put England upon a footing with its formidable neighbours were urged as an excuſe for ſuch a flagrant breach of faith; and a promiſe was made to the bankers, that intereſt, at the rate of ſix per cent. ſhould be paid them during the detainment of their money. But this not being ſufficient to ſatisfy the bankers, or to reſtore the neceſſary circulation of caſh, the king convened his creditors before him at the treaſury, where he gave them poſitive aſſurances, that he would punctually diſcharge his debts, either out of the next parliamentary grants, or his own revenue; and where he required them to make their payments to the merchants, and to the other creditors, as before. Having amuſed them with theſe promiſes, he kept the exchequer ſhut, on the ſame plea of neceſſity, for

for almoſt a year and a half; nor did he during that period convene the parliament, out of whoſe next grants the public creditors were led to hope for ſatisfaction *. When ſome of thoſe, who had depoſited their money with the bankers, tired by long delay, commenced actions for the recovery of their property, injunctions were iſſued out of chancery, by order of Government, to ſtop ſuch proceedings. Thus the king's breach of faith was followed and ſupported by the farther infraction of ſuch laws, as are of the firſt importance in every commercial country. As the high church party were always courted at the expence of the diſſenters, when the king found it neceſſary to obtain money from the parliament; ſo in their turn the non-conformiſts were cajoled by indulgences, when

* The exchequer was ſhut on the ſixth of January, 1672; and in December following, the king publiſhed a proclamation, in which he ſaid, "that notwithſtanding he had not been wanting on his part to comply with all honourable ways and means, that might effect a peace, yet the continuance of thoſe inevitable neceſſities, which firſt obliged him to ſhut up the exchequer, compelled him to continue to ſtop the pay of monies till the firſt of May next; doubting not but that his loving ſubjects would have ſuch truſt and confidence in his juſtice, that it would take away all apprehenſions of their being in the leaſt defrauded of their juſt dues."

The parliament had been alſo prorogued from the twenty-ſecond of April 1671 till the ſixteenth of April 1672; and was then farther adjourned to the fourth of February following; that the king might proſecute all his deſigns, without diſagreeable interruptions from any domeſtic conteſt.

his

his majeſty had entered into ſchemes either to emancipate himſelf from the neceſſity of parliaments, or to awe thoſe aſſemblies into a perfect ſubmiſſion to his pleaſure. In conformity to this policy, the king now reſolved to make uſe of his ſupreme power in eccleſiaſtical matters; a power, which, he ſaid, was not only inherent in him, but which had been recognized by ſeveral acts of parliament; and by virtue of this authority he iſſued a proclamation, ſuſpending the penal laws enacted againſt all non-conformiſts, or recuſants whatſoever, and granting to the proteſtant diſſenters the public exerciſe of their religion, to the catholics the exerciſe of it in private houſes *.

Juſt before the laſt ſeſſions of parliament, the king had cauſed all the acts againſt the non-conformiſts to be enforced with the greateſt rigour. They were not only expoſed to the law, but to the ſword. The train-bands were let looſe upon them; many were wounded, ſome were killed, and others proſecuted with ſo little regard even for the common forms of juſtice, that juries, after being kept for three days without meat or drink, were then fined and impriſoned, for not being willing to

* Burnet tells us, that ſir Orlando Bridgman, the lord keeper, refuſed to put the great ſeal to this declaration for indulgence, as judging it contrary to law. He was therefore diſmiſſed; and Aſhley, lately created earl of Shafteſbury, was made lord high chancellor.

perjure

perjure themſelves, by giving a verdict contrary to evidence againſt their innocent fellow citizens. It was upon one of theſe occaſions, that the recorder of London declared in open court, that it would never be well in England, till ſomething like the Spaniſh inquiſition was eſtabliſhed.

Charles had various reaſons for encouraging ſuch ſeverities at that time, and for now adopting a contrary ſyſtem of lenity. He hoped to render parliament, which was then going to meet, more liberal in their ſupplies, and more propitious to his deſigns, by a pretended zeal for the eſtabliſhed church. He alſo thought it probable, that the non-conformiſts might be driven to ſuch acts of diſobedience as would give him eaſier means of increaſing the force of his troops, and coming ſpeedily to the end he propoſed. But, above all, he flattered himſelf, that the violence of ſuch a temporary perſecution would increaſe the enmity of all the proteſtant diſſenters to the eſtabliſhed clergy, would leſſen their prejudices againſt the papiſts, would induce them to accept of indulgence on any terms, and of courſe make them willing that the Roman catholics ſhould participate of the intended toleration. But the diſſenters had been too often perfidiouſly treated by Charles, to become the dupes of ſuch ſhallow fallacy: they wiſhed for liberty of conſcience, but in a parliamentary way, not at the price of all the laws, or on terms of com-

prehenſion with papiſts. They joined, therefore, all their intereſt to that even of their perſecutors, to oblige the king to recal his declaration, which, under the ſhew of indulgence to every ſect, was deſigned to prepare the way for the eſtabliſhment of popery.

As no war had been yet declared againſt the Dutch, that nation thought themſelves ſecured by the treaty which ſtill ſubſiſted between them and England, and by that common law of nations, which governs the conduct of all civilized ſtates. On this ſecurity, a large fleet of merchantmen valued at a million and a half, was truſted to the ſmall convoy of five men of war. The hopes of ſeizing this rich prey, which was conſidered as a reſource for ſupporting military enterprizes, and ſetting the king entirely independent of parliamentary ſupplies, had prevented the court from making any open, or uſual declaration of their intended hoſtilities.

Sir Robert Holmes, a man well qualified for any piratical attempt, who in 1661 had in time of peace ſeized upon Cape Verde, and ſome other Dutch ſettlements on the coaſt of Guinea, was diſpatched with nine frigates and three yachts on this expedition. In paſſing the channel, he met with admiral Spragge, returning with a ſquadron from a cruize in the Mediterranean, who informed him

of

of the near approach of the Hollanders. Holmes, from the deſire of engroſſing the honour and the profit of the enterprize, kept the ſecret of his orders; and by avoiding this conjunction, which would have proved invincible, ſaved the Dutch fleet. When he firſt approached the Hollanders, he put on an amicable appearance, and invited the admiral, who commanded the convoy, to come on board of him. One of his captains gave a like inſidious invitation to the rear admiral. But theſe officers, who had received an intimation of the hoſtile intentions of the Engliſh, had already put all the ſhips of war and merchantmen in a poſture of defence. They were attacked by Holmes with all that impetuous courage which ſignalized his military conduct; and, during the ſpace of two whole days, they defended themſelves with a valour, that ſhewed them worthy of the important charge committed to their care. At length, by the favour of a miſt, the fleet got ſafe into the Dutch harbours, with the loſs only of one man of war, and three or four of the moſt inconſiderable merchantmen.

When the want of ſucceſs attends any diſhonourable action, it increaſes the ſize of its infamy in the opinion of the vulgar. Even the CABAL were aſhamed of the fruitleſs attempt, and endeavoured to repreſent it in the Gazette as a mere rencounter, occaſioned ſolely by the ill manners of the

Dutch, in refuſing to ſtrike and lower their top-ſails. However, there was no one ſo credulous as to believe, that the Dutch would, at the riſk of a valuable fleet, make choice of ſo very dangerous a moment, to contend a point, which they had already given up. Holmes himſelf, though preſſed to it, had not the impudence to affirm any ſuch thing. The ſame Gazette alſo contradicted itſelf, by acknowledging that the top-ſails were lowered.

The declaration of war, which had been kept back, only till the rich prize of the Smyrna fleet could be ſecured, was immediately iſſued after the event of that buſineſs *. In its preamble the world was deſired to believe, thas nothing but inevitable neceſſity had driven his majeſty into the war. The reaſons for this neceſſity were, the complaints of injuries done to the Eaſt-India company; the detention of Engliſh families in Surinam; the refuſal of the Dutch fleet to ſtrike to the Engliſh yacht; and ſome irritating pictures, medals, and pillars. This ſingular cauſe of going to war was thus ſtated:

" It is no wonder that they (the Dutch) venture at theſe outrages upon our ſubjects in remote parts, when they dare be ſo bold with our royal perſon, and the honour of this nation, ſo near us as in their own country, there being ſcarce a town

* It was publiſhed on the ſeventeenth of March, 1672.

within

within their territories, that is not filled with abuſive pictures, and falſe hiſtorical medals and pillars, ſome of which have been expoſed to the public view by command of the States themſelves, and in the very time when we were joined with them in united counſels, for the ſupport of the Triple Alliance, and the peace of Chriſtendom."

There was ſo little ground for this ridiculous complaint, that when the firſt intimation of it was given to the States in Downing's memorial, they did not know for a long time what to make of ſuch a ſtrange article, till it was at laſt diſcovered, that there was a portrait of Cornelius De Witt, the penſionary's brother, painted by the order of the magiſtrates of Dort, and hung up in a chamber of the town-houſe. In the back-ground of this picture, ſome ſhips were repreſented on fire in a harbour, as a trifling memorial of De Witt's maritime exploits. The offenſive medal was ſtruck after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle; and on one ſide repreſented Holland reſting herſelf on a trophy, and on tho other ſide an inſcription to this effect: "That ſhe had ſecured the laws; reformed religion; aſſiſted, defended, and reconciled kings; reſtored freedom to the ocean; procured by force of arms a glorious peace; and eſtabliſhed the tranquility of all Europe."

After the ſtatement of this unpardonable inſult, and ſome other aſſertions, equally falſe, or equally frivolous, the declaration concluded in the following extraordinary manner: "And whereas we are engaged by a treaty to ſupport the peace made at Aix-la-Chapelle, we do finally declare, that notwithſtanding the proſecution of this war, we will maintain the true intent and ſcope of the ſaid treaty; and that in all alliances which we have or ſhall make in the progreſs of this war, we have and will take care to preſerve the ends thereof inviolable, unleſs provoked to the contrary." It is evident from this alone, if we had not an abundance of other proofs, that Charles could publiſh to the world, as well as utter to his parliament, the groſſeſt falſehoods, and the moſt palpable inconſiſtencies, without a bluſh.

The king of France, who had only waited for Charles to begin, ſoon publiſhed his own declaration of war againſt the States, in the haughty ſtile of an ordinance by the king, in which he ſaid, "the diſſatisfaction he had in the carriage of the States General towards him, for ſome years paſt, having riſen to ſuch a height, that he could no longer, without a diminution of his glory, diſſemble the indignation raiſed in him by a treatment ſo unſuitable to the great obligations, which he and his predeceſſors had liberally heaped upon them:

them: he was therefore determined to make war againſt them, both by ſea and land *."

After the States General had uſed in vain every endeavour to divert the impending ſtorm, they were now obliged to face it with the moſt deſperate reſolution. De Ruyter once more appeared at ſea, the dauntleſs champion of the Dutch republic; nor could the combined thunders of his powerful enemies blaſt the laurels that ſtill flouriſhed round his brow. Notwithſtanding the great ſuperiority of their force and numbers, he left them no room to triumph in their ſucceſs. Both parties retired from the battle of Solebay with equal loſs; but though ſuch a conteſt was undoubtedly honourable to that brave commander, yet a complete victory could have hardly ſaved his country, at that time, from the deſtruction, which on every other ſide threatened to overwhelm her. The land forces of the United Provinces, which did not exceed twelve thouſand men, with a few auxiliaries received from Flanders, were very incompetent to the defence of

* The only inſtances of diſreſpect to this imperious monarch, which his miniſtry could alledge, were the pretended inſolence of the Dutch gazette, and a medal ſtruck by Van Beuninghen, one of the negociators of the peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, in which he compared himſelf to Joſhua ſtopping the courſe of the ſun. As Lewis had taken the ſun for his device, the meaning of the medal could not be miſtaken; but the States cauſed it to be ſuppreſſed. What a juſt cauſe for attempting two years after to exterminate the whole nation!

an extenſive frontier againſt an army of one hundred and eighteen thouſand foot, and twenty-ſix thouſand horſe, with the king of France at their head, aſſiſted by ſuch generals as Condé and Turenne. The elector of Cologne and the biſhop of Munſter had alſo taken the field, and ſoon made themſelves maſters of Overyſſel. Guelderland and Utrecht fell into the hands of the French; and Holland itſelf was driven to the laſt reſource of opening the ſluices, and laying the country under water, to ſtop the progreſs of the invaders *.

It was no longer in De Witt's power to be of any ſervice to a people, whoſe inteſtine diviſions were ſtill more fatal to them than the arms of the enemy. When that virtuous and enlightened politician firſt roſe to guide the councils of the ſtate, he found it neceſſary to form a connection with France, in order to balance the intrigues of the Orange faction with the Engliſh court. But as ſoon as he perceived the deſigns of Lewis, he diſclaimed the falſe friendſhip of ſuch an ally, and exerted his great talents in raiſing a barrier againſt that monarch's ambition. With this view he entered into a defenſive league with England; and though he always very juſtly ſuſpected the firmneſs and integrity of Charles, yet the immediate danger,

* The damage which the country ſuſtained, by this ſtep taken for its preſervation, was eſtimated at eighteen millions of guilders.

to

to which his country was expoſed from the irruption of the French army into Flanders, did not admit of any choice of expedients. It was very plain, from his firſt declaration to ſir William Temple *, that even at the time of negociating the treaty, he feared he was only graſping at a rotten bulruſh to ſave the drowning republic. The event fully confirmed the juſtneſs of his apprehenſions.

We are told, that this true patriot, on receiving a letter of the extent of the conſpiracy, which was formed againſt his unhappy country, fell into a ſwoon in the Stadthouſe; but recovering from the ſhock, he aſſumed his uſual intrepidity and vigilance in preparing for the unequal conteſt. It was by his animating endeavours that the Dutch fleet was put in a condition to cope, for ſome time at leaſt, with the combined armies of France and England. He alſo directed his thoughts to the beſt means of internal defence; but as the want of forces made it impoſſible to repel the torrent of aſſailants, he was blamed for all the perils and diſtreſſes of the ſtate. The people, naturally fickle, and impatient in adverſity, were inflamed againſt their once-admired leader by every art which party malice could invent; and though his incorruptible integrity had been as manifeſt as his wiſdom, yet his enemies were not aſhamed to ſpread abroad the

* See page 362.

diabolical

diabolical calumny, that he had been bribed to ſell his country to the ambition of the French monarch. The Prince of Orange was announced by his faction as the only ſaviour in the preſent time of imminent danger; and on his being appointed to the high office of admiral and captain-general, all the efforts of De Witt and of the remaining friends of freedom could prevail only to have an oath adminiſtered to the prince, that he ſhould never accept, even if required, the dignity of Stadtholder.

But the diminution of his authority was not the only effect of the ingratitude and fury of a miſguided populace, which De Witt was deſtined to experience. As the ſituation of affairs became every day more hopeleſs, the rage of the mob roſe higher. The exacting of the before-mentioned oath from the prince of Orange was not only looked upon as a crime, but as a proof of De Witt's treachery to the ſtate. Four ruffians aſſaulted him in the ſtreet, and after giving him many wounds, left him for dead. His brother Cornelius, who had gone on board the fleet with De Ruyter, and had behaved with great prudence and courage, was obliged by ſickneſs to come on ſhore; and whilſt confined to his houſe at Dort, ſome aſſaſſins broke in upon him, and it was with the utmoſt difficulty that his family and ſervants could repel their violence.

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This was but the prelude to the melancholy tragedy which followed. One Tichelear, a barber, a man noted for infamy, accuſed Cornelius De Witt of endeavouring by bribes to engage him in the deſign of poiſoning the prince of Orange; and the accuſation, though attended with the moſt improbable and abſurd circumſtances, was greedily received by the multitude. Cornelius was cited before a court of judicature, and through the puſillanimity, or prejudices of the judge, was condemned to be put to the rack. Amidſt excruciating agonies, he continued to make proteſtations of his innocence, and frequently repeated that juſtly admired ode of Horace, "*Juſtum et tenacem propoſiti virum, &c.*" containing thoſe heroic ſentiments which had directed the conduct of his life, and now ſuſtained him under a trial too ſevere for the common feelings of humanity. But though his innocence was thus ſupported by the firmneſs of his temper, and conſequently he was acquitted by law and reaſon, yet he was condemned to loſe his offices, and to be baniſhed the commonwealth.

John de Witt, who had now given up his office of penſionary, was incapable of being terrified by the rage of the populace, from acting the part of an affectionate brother, and a faithful friend. He ſupported and countenanced Cornelius through the whole proceeding; and when the ſentence was paſſed upon him, he reſolved to accompany him, and

and to carry him in his coach to the place of his exile. No ſooner did De Witt appear in his coach, a part of parade and indulgence to which he did not uſually accuſtom himſelf, than the ſignal was given to the populace to finiſh the laſt ſcene of the tragedy, and fully to execute the purpoſe of the party. The mob, with ſome of the burgher companies, or train-bands of the Hague, gathered about him in a tumultuous manner, and followed him to the priſon with much opprobrious language. De Witt was ſenſible of the danger which awaited him, but proceeded in the noble reſolution he had taken; and on the appearance of the two brothers, arm in arm, they were both knocked down and maſſacred. The indignities exerciſed on their dead bodies are too ſhocking to be related. With them expired Dutch liberty.

After contemplating this horrid ſcene, it is impoſſible to feel any pity for the calamities, which ſo ungrateful and brutal a people then ſuffered, or for the abject and degraded ſituation to which they have been ſince reduced. In the exceſs of their deſpair, they made an effort to ſoothe their enemies by ſubmiſſion; but the terms inſiſted on by the allied kings were ſo humiliating and oppreſſive, that they reſolved to hold out to the laſt extremity, and rather than ſubmit to the French yoke, to tranſport themſelves and their families to the Eaſt-Indies. Having opened their ſluices, as before obſerved,

they

they ſought a dearly purchaſed ſecurity on the land ſide behind their inundations. At ſea they were in more imminent danger. The combined fleets, having repaired the damage ſuſtained in the firſt battle, before De Ruyter was again in a condition to oppoſe them, were preparing to make a deſcent upon the coaſt of Zealand; but the enterprize was defeated by an extraordinary ebb of the tide, which continued for twelve hours inſtead of ſix, and was followed by ſuch a ſtorm as obliged the invaders to quit the coaſt and provide for their own ſafety. This gave the Dutch a little breathing time; and towards the cloſe of the firſt campaign, the emperor of Germany and the elector of Brandenburg, having at length taken the alarm, entered into an alliance offenſive and defenſive with the States, and made the neceſſary diſpoſitions for aſſiſting them with vigour and effect.

Charles, who had made his account to find in the ſpoils of the United Provinces wealth enough for the ſupply of all his wants and wiſhes, began now to perceive the vanity of ſuch expectations. Sluices, tides, winds, and ſeveral other untoward and unforeſeen accidents had baffled a combination of forces, which he thought would have proved irreſiſtible. Inſtead of enriching, he had impoveriſhed himſelf, and had not only ſpent the ſupplies of the nation, and the bribes of France, but the money alſo which he ſtill with-held from the public

public creditors by the moſt ſcandalous and illegal methods. He was therefore at length obliged to permit the meeting of parliament, after having delayed it for almoſt two years, in hopes of becoming independent of their aſſiſtance.

During ſo long a ſuſpenſion of the national councils, grievances had been accumulating very faſt. Charles, as if he was already in the undiſputed poſſeſſion of that arbitrary power, which was to be the reſult of his union with the court of France, diſpenſed with the laws at pleaſure, as in his declaration of indulgence, and in the injunctions againſt all proceedings for the recovery of money lent to the bankers: he ſuſpended the navigation act: he iſſued various proclamations in the moſt deſpotic ſtile, and one in particular againſt thoſe who preſumed to ſpeak undutifully of his majeſty's meaſures, and againſt all who heard ſuch diſcourſes, unleſs they gave information in due time of the offenders: having levied an army to fulfil his engagements in the ſecret treaty with France, and to intimidate his own ſubjects, he cauſed the diſcipline of martial law to be eſtabliſhed by an order of his council, in direct contradiction to the petition of right. Beſides ſix thouſand men that he had ſent under the duke of Monmouth to join the French army, there were between five and ſix thouſand more raiſed, and encamped at Blackheath, and the command of them was given to a foreigner,

foreigner, count Schomberg. It was this circumſtance which probably encouraged Shafteſbury, the new chancellor, to add to the former alarming ſtretches of power the iſſuing out of writs to ſupply the vacancies which death and promotion had made in the parliament, without waiting for the meeting of this aſſembly, or the authority of the ſpeaker's warrant.

Theſe and many other flagrant violations of the people's rights did not hinder Charles from addreſſing parliament with the fulleſt confidence. He would have called them together ſooner, he ſaid, but that he was willing to eaſe them and the country, till there was an abſolute neceſſity. He then informed them, that ſince their laſt meeting, he had been forced into a war, not only juſt, but neceſſary for the honour and intereſt of the nation; and he made no doubt but they would give him ſuitable and effectual aſſiſtance to go through with it. In order to have peace at home, while there was war abroad, he had iſſued his indulgence to diſſenters, and had found many good effects to reſult from that meaſure, He had heard of ſome exceptions, which had been taken; but he would tell them plainly, he was reſolved to ſtick to his declaration, and he ſhould be much offended at any contradiction. A rumour, he ſaid, had been ſpread, as if the new levied troops had been intended to controul law and liberty; but he regarded

that

that jealouſy as ſo frivolous, that he was determined to augment his forces next ſpring; and he did not doubt but the commons would conſider the charge of them in the ſupplies. He concluded with his uſual ſtrain of aſſurances, that he would preſerve the proteſtant religion as by law eſtabliſhed, and that no man's property or liberty ſhould ever be invaded; and then ſaid, he left the reſt to the chancellor.

To do the chancellor juſtice, he did not fall ſhort of his maſter either in falſehood, or in impudence. He enlarged on all the hints dropt by the king, particularly on the provocations to the war. He ſaid, "that the Hollanders were the common enemies of all monarchies, eſpecially that of England, their only competitor for commerce and naval power, and the ſole obſtacle to their views of attaining an univerſal empire as extenſive as that of ancient Rome: that the king, in entering on this war, did no more than proſecute the maxims, which had engaged the parliament to adviſe and approve of the laſt war: they had judged aright, that, at any rate, DELENDA EST CARTHAGO, that government was to be brought down: the king might, therefore, well ſay to them, *it was* THEIR *war*." After having by this curious piece of logic endeavoured to prove that a war, which Charles had engaged in, with the wicked deſign of plundering the Dutch, and of thereby enabling himſelf to ſubvert the conſtitution of England, was the war

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of parliament, though, by means of unuſual prorogations, they had been prevented from approving or condemning it, he urged them to a hearty conjunction againſt thoſe eternal enemies of their country; and told them, that unleſs their ſupplies were frank, ſpeedy, and liberal, they could never anſwer the important occaſion.

As the commons, upon their meeting, had complained loudly of the ſteps taken by the chancellor to fill up all the vacancies in parliament with his own creatures, and by his own authority, the king, immediately after the two ſpeeches, declared, "that he had given order to the lord chancellor to ſend out writs, for the better ſupply of their houſe, having ſeen precedents for it; but if any ſcruple or queſtion did ariſe about it, he left it to the houſe to debate as ſoon as they could." The following day, they voted the writs and returns irregular, and expelled all the members thus elected. Their next vote, which, indeed, excited ſome ſurprize, was a ſupply of upwards of twelve hundred thouſand pounds; but as they did not expreſs the leaſt approbation, or take any notice of the war, it was undoubtedly done to obtain a redreſs of their grievances, without coming to a violent breach with the king.

The declaration of indulgence had given the moſt offence. Beſides the danger of ſubmitting to

an arbitrary ſuſpenſion of penal laws, ſome events had happened during the long receſs, which rendered the views of the court more evident and more alarming. In the year 1671 the ducheſs of York died, and in her laſt ſickneſs had made open profeſſion of the Romiſh religion. Such an extraordinary circumſtance as this would have fixed ſome ſuſpicions on the duke of York, had he even continued his former hypocriſy. But encouraged by the concluſion of the treaty with France, he openly declared his converſion to the church of Rome; and ſhewed his deſire to have a ſecond wife of the ſame perſuaſion, by his ſoliciting, though unſucceſsfully, a marriage with the arch-ducheſs of Inſpruck.

One of the moſt determined purpoſes of the commons was therefore to oppoſe the progreſs of popery. Three days after the vote of ſupply, the declaration of indulgence was ordered to be read; and after a long and ſolemn debate, in which arbitrary power was openly defended by ſome of the courtiers, the houſe reſolved, that penal ſtatutes, in matters eccleſiaſtical, could not be ſuſpended but by act of parliament. An addreſs, on this reſolution, was ſent up to the throne, in the name of the lower houſe, the concurrence of the lords not having been aſked, as they were likely to oppoſe the meaſure. The addreſs contained the words of the vote of thanks for the king's gracious aſ-

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ſurances on the ſubject of religion, liberty, and property; and concluded with an humble requeſt, that the laws might have their free courſe, until it ſhould be otherwiſe provided for by act of parliament.

The king, agreeable to what he had declared in his ſpeech, ſtood ſtiffly on this point of prerogative. The commons perſevered in their denial of the right, and moreover brought in a qualifying bill, which made it eſſential that all perſons bearing any office, or place of truſt or profit, ſhould take the oaths of ſupremacy and allegiance, receive the ſacrament in public church, and abjure all belief in the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. This was called the TEST ACT, and was calculated to throw all papiſts out of office. During the debates, to which it gave riſe, the court-party, by the inſtructions of lord Clifford, moved, that ſome favour might be ſhewn to proteſtant diſſenters, and that their meetings might be allowed. But the drift of this manœuvre, by which the courtiers hoped to ſeparate the religious factions in the houſe, and to divert the blow from the papiſts by raiſing a new flame againſt the non-conformiſts, was eaſily ſeen through. The whole diſſenting party immediately declared, that all their friends were at preſent willing to lie under the ſeverity of the laws, rather than clog a more neceſſary work with their con-

cerns; and only desired that an effectual security might be found out against popery *.

When every artifice had been tried in vain to divert the commons from their purpose, the king sent a complaint of their conduct to the house of peers, whose honour and privileges, he said, were equally attacked with his own prerogative. There is no regular account of the debate on this message; but, according to Burnet, lord Clifford began it, by calling the vote, which the commons had passed on the declaration of indulgence, *monstrum horendum, ingens*; and declaimed against it with great heat, and many indecent expressions. To the amazement and confusion of the king and duke, who were auditors of this important debate, Shaftesbury was the first man who stood up to oppose what had fallen from lord Clifford. "Whilst those matters," he said, "were debated out of doors, he might have thought with others, that the supremacy, asserted as it was by law, did warrant the declaration; but now that such a house of commons, so loyal and affectionate to the king, were

* This generous sacrifice of their own concerns to the general security of the protestant religion had such an effect on the house, that a bill was brought in and readily assented to, for abrogating all the rigorous laws made against them in this reign; but it was stopt in the upper house by the influence of the crown.

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of another mind, he ſubmitted his reaſon to them: they were the king's great council; they muſt both adviſe and ſupport him; they had done it, and would do it ſtill, if their laws and religion were ſecure to them." By this bold and unexpected ſtroke of policy, Shafteſbury threw off the odium he had incurred from his intrigues with the court, and ſecured his perſonal ſafety by a timely oppoſition to thoſe meaſures which he had approved in the cabinet.

The lords, after thanking the king for the truſt and confidence he had repoſed in them, recommended the adjuſting of the matter in diſpute, in a parliamentary way, by bill; and afterwards joined with the commons in an addreſs on the increaſe of popiſh recuſants, and the great and dangerous encouragement given to papiſts, by admitting them into places of great truſt, and eſpecially into military commands; and they humbly deſired that a proclamation might be iſſued, commanding all prieſts and jeſuits to depart the kingdom; and that all officers, who refuſed the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy might be diſbanded.

Lord Shafteſbury's defection, and the union between the two houſes, occaſioned a diviſion in the opinions of the miniſtry, who had never been united in that firm concord which mutual confidence creates, or in that unſhaken reſolution

which honeſt counſels inſpire. The duke of Buckingham and his creature, lord Berkley, offered, with the aſſiſtance of the army, to take out of both houſes the members which formed the oppoſition. Clifford aſſured the king that the people now ſaw through all his deſigns, and he muſt reſolve to make himſelf maſter at once, or be for ever ſubject to their jealouſy and contempt. The duke of Lauderdale preſſed with much vehemence the ſending for the army out of Scotland, and the ſeizing on Newcaſtle. But lord Arlington and the earl of Shafteſbury (who had excuſed his conduct in the debate, on the neceſſity he ſaw of ſaying ſomething to allay the heat, which lord Clifford's ſpeech would have occaſioned, to the infallible obſtruction of the ſupplies) preſſed the king to give the parliament full content, on which they undertook to procure him money for carrying on the war, and were he ſucceſsful in that, he might eaſily recover what in this extremity he muſt part with.

On the next day ſeveral members of the houſe of commons backed what Shafteſbury had aſſerted, and aſſured the king, that, on lord Clifford's ſpeech, the houſe was in ſuch a fury, that probably they would have gone to high votes and impeachments, but for lord Shafteſbury's haranguing on the other ſide, who, they believed, ſpoke his majeſty's ſenſe, as the other ſide had ſpoken that of the duke. Thoſe repreſentations from many of the members,

who

who were ſecretly directed by lord Arlington, had little effect on either the king or the duke: they regarded themſelves as betrayed by the treachery or timidity of Shafteſbury and Arlington. The violent counſels of Buckingham, Lauderdale, and Clifford were more agreeable; and the diſſolution of parliament was in agitation when the French king, who feared that the quarrel between Charles and his people would bring on the neceſſity of concluding a peace with Holland, inſiſted ſtrongly, by the mouth of his embaſſador, on the propriety and policy of ſatisfying for the preſent the jealouſy of parliament; and accompanied thoſe arguments with a promiſe, that the ſuccours ſtipulated on the part of France, ſhould be extended, after the expiration of the treaty. Charles immediately gave way, and aſſured the embaſſador, that his maſter's ſentiments had more power with him than all the reaſonings of his moſt faithful miniſters; and that he was ſo ſenſibly touched with the marks of ſincere friendſhip his moſt Chriſtian majeſty had ſhewn him, that, to teſtify fully his acknowledgments, he would grant, without any farther deliberation, what his ſubjects ſo preſſingly aſked of him.

According to what had been determined between the king and the embaſſador, his majeſty next day ſent for the declaration, and with his own hands broke the ſeal; and repairing to the houſe

of lords, he ſignified his agreement to the addreſs which had been offered to him on the ſubject of popiſh recuſants; promiſed the two houſes, that what had been done concerning the ſuſpenſion of the penal laws, ſhould never, for the future, be drawn into example and conſequence; and aſſured the commons that he would willingly paſs any law offered him, which might tend to give them ſatisfaction in all their juſt grievances. Thus did this arrant diſſembler endeavour to give the moſt popular appearance to conceſſions, which were entirely owing to the preſſing inſtances of the king of France, and to the hope of obtaining at ſome future day, by that king's aſſiſtance, ample revenge for theſe temporary abatements of royal prerogative.

In return for the king's condeſcenſion, the two houſes waited on his majeſty in a body, and gave him their humble thanks and acknowledgments. An act of general pardon and indemnity was paſſed, which ſcreened the miniſters from all farther inquiry. The reſolution for a ſupply was carried into a law before any farther redreſs of grievances, except paſſing the Teſt; and though a petition was preſented praying relief in other matters, the king, having got his own buſineſs ſettled, gave the commons an evaſive anſwer, and adjourned the parliament for about ſix months.

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Though the Teſt was followed by a few changes of perſons in ſome of the public departments, it produced no alteration of ſyſtem in the king's conduct, or councils. Moſt of the Roman catholic officers reſigned their commiſſions, but were ſecretly flattered with the hope of being re-inſtated in their poſts at a more favourable period. Lord Clifford was deprived of his white ſtaff, which was given to ſir Thomas Oſborn, a man equally corrupt and equally intriguing. The duke of York himſelf was obliged to give up his high appointment of lord high admiral, and the command of the fleet was given to prince Rupert. The duke is ſaid to have ſhed tears upon the occaſion; but they were not tears of repentance, nor did he endeavour to regain the affections of a people, whoſe confidence he had juſtly forfeited. He now threw himſelf entirely on the ſupport of France; kept up a cloſe correſpondence with that court; and regardleſs of the ſentiments or remonſtrances of parliament, choſe for his ſecond wife a Roman catholic princeſs, the daughter of the duke of Modena.

The campaign of 1673 afforded much fewer gratifications to the avarice, or ambition of the royal conſpirators than that of the preceding year. De Ruyter, though with a fleet greatly inferior, had the glory, in three different engagements, of reſiſting with effect the combined ſquadrons of England and France, and completely defeating their

their reſumed project of a deſcent in Zealand. The affairs of the United Provinces took a ſtill more favourable turn by land. The prince of Orange having effected a junction with the imperial army under the command of Montecuculi, they ſoon obliged Lewis to abandon his conqueſts, with a rapidity equal to his former ſucceſs. The taking of Maeſtricht, which he owed in a great meaſure to the vigour and conduct of the Engliſh troops, was the only advantage he gained to compenſate ſo many mortifications. A congreſs, which had been opened in the mean time at Cologne, under the mediation of Sweden, broke up, without having produced any other effect than that of increaſing the animoſities it was deſigned to appeaſe.

At the re-meeting of parliament the king made an attempt to obtain another ſupply, in which he was ſeconded by Shafteſbury, who was ſtill continued in office for that very purpoſe; but the dread of popery and arbitrary power counteracted all farther impoſition. The firſt ſtep of the commons was an order for the ſolemn obſervance of the fifth of November: they ſent up repeated addreſſes to the throne on the ſubject of the duke's marriage: they proceeded to vote that a bill ſhould be prepared for a general teſt, between proteſtants and papiſts, by which thoſe who refuſed to take it were rendered incapable of bearing any office, military or civil, or to ſit in parliament, or to come within

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five miles of the court: they ordered an addreſs for a general faſt: they voted the ſtanding army a grievance; and declared that they would grant no more ſupplies, unleſs it appeared that the Dutch were ſo obſtinate as to refuſe all reaſonable conditions of peace.

In order to ſtop theſe proceedings the king prorogued the parliament for two monhts; and in the mean time endeavoured to ſoften the reſentment of the public by putting the laws in force againſt papiſts. But the nation was no longer to be cajoled by ſuch flimſy artifice. The earl of Shafteſbury, having been deprived of the ſeals immediately after the late diſmiſſion of parliament, was now become one of the leaders of the oppoſition, and took care to give his party proper ideas of the arbitrary deſigns of the court. The States General had made frequent propoſals of a ſeparate peace with England, ſome of which had even been printed and circulated through the kingdom. Spain alſo, with whom the Engliſh carried on a very lucrative trade, had declared that ſhe could no longer remain neuter, if hoſtilities were continued againſt the Dutch. Even the king of France, though ſo deeply intereſted in keeping Charles firm to his ſecret engagements, had refuſed the ſupply of an additional million of livres for the ſupport of the war. In this ſituation of affairs, Charles having again tried the

the liberality of the commons in vain, found that he could no longer oppoſe the wiſhes of his people, and concluded a treaty with the Dutch *. But as this did not prevent the commons from proceeding to the examination of other grievances, nor from preparing ſome bills of the moſt offenſive nature to a tyrant †, he had recourſe to his uſual expedient, a prorogation.

* In order to keep up the ſhew of having obtained the points, which had been alledged by Charles as pretences for the war, the honour of the flag, which, in the treaty of Breda had been agreed to only in general terms, was now inſiſted upon in a particular manner, the diſtinction between a fleet and a ſingle ſhip, or even a yacht, being expreſsly diſallowed. The Engliſh planters at Surinam were permitted to remove at pleaſure; but this, in fact, had been before the caſe, as thoſe planters remained there from their own choice. A ſeeming regulation of the Eaſt India trade was alſo inſerted, but without any peculiar advantages to England. Even the article, by which the States engaged to pay the king eight hundred thouſand patacoons (between two and three hundred thouſand pounds) was little more than a pretended acknowledgment, as if the peace was to be purchaſed; for according to Dr. Burnet, lord Arlington had privately agreed that this money ſhould be made over to the prince of Orange, for the payment of a debt which Charles owed him.

† One of theſe was the famous Habeas Corpus bill, which is acknowledged to be the greateſt, if not the only ſupport of perſonal freedom in this kingdom; and was calculated to ſet bounds to the arbitrary proceedings of miniſters, and to preſerve thoſe, who fell under their diſpleaſure, from being baniſhed or impriſoned, without cauſe or relief. But though this bill was now hindered from being paſſed into a law; it was afterwards taken up, and carried through by the new parliament in 1679.

Lewis

Lewis ſoon repented his having refuſed to add another million to the private ſubſidy, as it was evidently the want of money, which had forced his ally to conclude a ſeparate peace. He took care, however, to prevent Charles from being driven, either by the violence of parliament, or the emptineſs of the exchequer, into any other meaſures, which might thwart his ambitious deſigns. A bribe of five hundred thouſand crowns had the deſired effect. The parliament was farther prorogued; and the king of France was not only left at liberty to carry on the war without any interruption from England, but was allowed to retain the ſix thouſand Engliſh auxiliaries in his ſervice; and had his army frequently recruited by the moſt illegal means out of Scotland *. All remonſtrances upon this head from the commons, when they were at length permitted to meet, proved ineffectual †. Charles made

* It appeared from unqueſtionable evidence, laid before the houſe of commons, that ſeveral hundreds of Scotchmen had been forced from their families, bound together, and, like galley ſlaves, ſecured in the public goals, and from thence put on ſhipboard, and tranſported into the ſervice of France, contrary to the addreſſes of parliament, his majeſty's promiſes and ſham proclamations, and the rights of nature.

† The naval ſucceſſes of the French in 1676 were, indeed, very alarming. Their fleet under the duke De Vivonne, which was ſent to relieve Meſſina, was attacked by the joint ſquadrons of Spain and the United Provinces. Though the French were worſted in the firſt engagement, yet the gallant De Ruyter, whoſe courage, ſkill, and fidelity had ſo highly contributed to the preſervation

made a new bargain with the French monarch; and in the beginning of the year 1676, when, by joining the States and their allies, he might have regained the confidence of his people and the reſpect of all Europe, he obliged himſelf, in conſideration of a yearly penſion from Lewis, to prorogue, or diſſolve the parliament, if it ſhould endeavour to force any treaties upon him, contrary to that king's intereſt. This ſecond infamous compact was known only to the duke of York, the duke of Lauderdale, and the treaſurer, who had been created earl of Danby, and who now ſhared with Lauderdale all the truſt and favour, which, for a ſhort time, had been divided among the CABAL.

Notwithſtanding the profound ſecrecy of all thoſe tranſactions, the nation took the alarm at the king's indifference to the danger which threatened Europe *; and became very clamorous, at the opening of

ſervation of his country, was killed. This alone was more than equivalent to a victory, and ſoon led to a total defeat of the Dutch and Spaniſh fleets at Palermo, where they loſt twelve capital ſhips, beſides ſeveral other veſſels, ſeven hundred cannon, and five thouſand men; by which the French, to the terror of Europe, became maſters of the Mediterranean, reduced ſeveral places of importance, and endangered the revolt of all Naples and Sicily.

* The king was equally deaf to the murmurs of the people at large; but though he would not liſten to their complaints, he endeavoured

of the year 1674, for a meeting of their repreſentatives, for a war with France, and an alliance with Holland. It being thought neceſſary at this time to aſſemble the parliament, an additional ſum of money was remitted from France, to enable the Engliſh miniſter to gain a majority; and ſo great was the reliance on the ſucceſs of ſuch forcible arguments, that, on the fifteenth of February, the very day the ſeſſion was to be opened, the French king appointed his march for Flanders, as if, ſays Andrew Marvel, his motions were in juſt cadence, and that, as in a grand ballet, he kept time with thoſe, who were tuned here to his meaſures.

endeavoured in the moſt arbitrary manner to ſuppreſs them. The licences of all the coffee-houſes, where people ſpoke with moſt freedom of the national grievances, were recalled, and the granting of any new ones prohibited by a proclamation ordered in council on the twenty-ninth of December, 1675. In about a week after, another proclamation was publiſhed for diſcovering and puniſhing the authors of any libels on government, or on its miniſters. The ſuppreſſion of the coffee-houſes was every where exclaimed againſt as illegal; nor could the ſophiſtry of corrupt judges on this point baffle common ſenſe. They alledged, that no perſons could retail liquors without a licence; and that the ſeſſions could refuſe a licence to whom they pleaſed. But the words of the law, which ſettled the exciſe, only objected to thoſe who could not find ſecurity for the payment of the duties; and beſides, coffee was not a liquor ſubjected to the exciſe. Charles found it the wiſeſt counſel to yield to a petition of the coffee-men, who promiſed to reſtrain ſeditious diſcourſe, and to prevent the reading of libels in their houſes.

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The king addreſſed both houſes with his uſual plauſibility, ſoliciting money for the repairing of the navy, with a reaſonable ſupply for himſelf, and the continuation of the additional exciſe, which was to expire at Midſummer. As the lord treaſurer had employed the French king's means of perſuaſion with great ſkill, the commons voted five hundred and eighty-four thouſand pounds, on the apparent neceſſity of augmenting the navy; and continued the additional exciſe for three years. Nor did they trouble the king with any importunate addreſſes about foreign affairs, till intelligence was received from abroad, that Valenciennes had fallen into the hands of the French. Upon this, they repreſented to his majeſty the danger, to which the kingdom was expoſed from the greatneſs of France; and they intreated him to ſecure, by ſuch alliances as he ſhould think fit, his own dominions and the Spaniſh Netherlands, and thereby to quiet the fears of his people. As the king gave an evaſive anſwer to this firſt repreſentation, they followed it with another, urging their former requeſt in terms more explicit, and promiſing ſuch ſupplies, as might enable his majeſty to proſecute the object of their deſires with ſucceſs. Charles took almoſt a fortnight to conſider, how to elude ſo pointed an application.

In the mean time freſh advices brought the terrifying news, that Cambray and St. Omer had undergone

gone the ſame fate as Valenciennes: that the prince of Orange, who had haſtily aſſembled an army, and marched to the relief of the laſt town, had been defeated and obliged to retreat to Ypres; and that the French troops in Germany had broke into the provinces on the other ſide of the Rhine, and laid waſte all before them. Theſe accumulated diſaſters, which expoſed the Dutch, as well as the Spaniſh provinces to imminent danger, and conſequently rendered the progreſs of the French arms very formidable to the ſafety of England, rouſed every body's apprehenſions but the king's, who coldly replied to the laſt addreſs of the commons, that, upon ſome alterations abroad, he thought fit to put them in mind, "that the only way to prevent the dangers which might ariſe in theſe kingdoms, would be to put him timely in a condition to make ſuch fitting preparations, as might enable him to do what ſhould be moſt for their ſecurity." This gave riſe to a debate, the reſult of which was the propoſal of an addition of two hundred thouſand pounds to the ſum already voted; and a promiſe to re-imburſe whatſoever his majeſty ſhould expend in extraordinary preparations. The king ſaid, he could take no ſteps, without the additional ſum of ſix hundred thouſand pounds; and as the commons excuſed themſelves from complying with this peremptory demand, on the pretence that many of their members, in expectation of the uſual receſs at Eaſter, were gone into the

country, and that they did not think it parliamentary to grant ſo much money in a thin houſe, he adjourned the parliament for about five weeks.

At the opening of the late ſeſſion an affair happened, which greatly diminiſhed the ſtrength of the oppoſition, by intimidating ſome, who might have reſiſted the lord treaſurer's bribes. An unlucky queſtion was ſtarted in each houſe, but debated only by the peers, Whether the parliament had any right to enter upon buſineſs? It had been enacted by a law of Edward III. that parliaments ſhould be held at leaſt once every year; and as the laſt prorogation had been longer than a year, the duke of Buckingham aſſerted, that the parliament was illegal, and its future acts conſequently invalid, founding his opinion on the before-mentioned law, and ſome other ancient ſtatutes, "which," he ſaid, "were not, like women, the worſe for being old." He was ſtrenuouſly ſupported by the earls of Shafteſbury, Saliſbury, and Warton; but all four were ſent to the Tower, there to remain during the pleaſure of his majeſty and the houſe, for having advanced ſuch *dangerous* poſitions, as they were termed. Buckingham, Saliſbury, and Wharton made ſubmiſſions, and were ſoon releaſed *. Shafteſbury ſought the remedy of law, but

* The earl of Shafteſbury had, upon ſome former occaſion, reflected on the duke of Buckingham, as a man inconſtant and giddy

but his plea being rejected by the judges, he was at length, after a year's impriſonment, obliged to make the ſame ſubmiſſions before he could obtain his freedom *.

When the parliament re-aſſembled, the buſineſs agitated at the laſt meeting was opened by a verbal meſſage from the king, with an intimation that the commons had no time to loſe, as his majeſty intended that there ſhould be a receſs very quickly; but the houſe ſtill keeping firm to their reſolution of parting with no money till the neceſſary alliances were formed, and having ordered a committee to prepare a bill for recalling the Engliſh and Scotch out of the French ſervice, they were ſent for, to attend at Whitehall, where the king told them, that, on his royal word, they ſhould not repent any truſt, which they ſhould repoſe in him for the ſafety of

giddy in his conduct. As the duke was taking coach, on his diſcharge out of the Tower, the earl looking out of his window, cried, "What, my lord, are you going to leave us?"—"Ay, my lord," replied the duke, "ſuch giddy-headed fellows as I can never ſtay long in a place."

* There was another inſtance of rigorous ſeverity in the conduct of the lords at the ſame time, and on the ſame account. One Dr. Cary was queſtioned at the bar of their houſe, concerning a manuſcript treatiſe on the illegality of the prorogation, which he had carried to the preſs; and becauſe, agreeable to the authority of the laws, which require no man to accuſe himſelf, he declined anſwering certain queſtions which were put to him, he was fined a thouſand pounds, and kept cloſe priſoner in the Tower, till it was paid.

his kingdom; that he would not, for any conſideration, break credit with them, or employ their money to other purpoſes than thoſe for which they intended it; but that he would not hazard either his own ſafety, or theirs, till he was in a better condition to defend his ſubjects, and offend his enemies." Vague promiſes and the deſire of money before-hand could not allay juſt ſuſpicions. The commons, therefore, reſolved to preſent an addreſs to the king, in which they declared it contrary to eſtabliſhed uſage to grant ſupplies for the maintenance of wars and alliances, before they were ſignified in parliament: they alſo humbly beſought his majeſty to enter into a league offenſive and defenſive with the States General, againſt the growth and power of the French king, and for the preſervation of the Spaniſh Netherlands; and to make ſuch other alliances with ſuch other of the confederates as his majeſty ſhould think fit and uſeful to that end: they ſtated ſeveral reaſons to convince him of the abſolute neceſſity of a war with France at the preſent criſis; and renewed all their former promiſes of ſuch ſpeedy ſupplies as might fully anſwer the occaſion.

The terms of this addreſs were as moderate and reſpectful as if his majeſty had always purſued the wiſeſt meaſures: there were no alluſions to any former miſconduct in the adminiſtration: the prayer, which it contained, was authorized by a variety

variety of precedents, in which the repreſentatives of the people adviſed ſuch wars and alliances as were thought neceſſary for the ſafety and welfare of the kingdom: it required no other reply than a candid avowal of the king's ſentiments. Yet his majeſty affected to repreſent it as a dangerous encroachment on his prerogative. He made a ſevere ſpeech on the ſubject to the commons at Whitehall; and ordered them to be immediately adjourned *. The Gazette of the next day contained his reproving ſpeech, being the firſt which had ever appeared in that paper. Thus, ſays Marvel, were the commons well rewarded for their itch of perpetual ſitting and of acting, the parliament being grown to that height of contempt as to be gazetted among run-away ſervants, lap-dogs, ſtrayed horſes, and highway robbers.

* It had always been the cuſtom of parliament to adjourn themſelves, unleſs the adjournments had been made under the ſpecial commiſſion of the great ſeal; and this privilege was now granted to the lords. But ſome members of the lower houſe, on their return from Whitehall, riſing up, poſſibly to expreſs a ſenſe of the rough treatment they had met with, Mr. Edward Seymour, who officiated as ſpeaker for ſir Job Charlton then indiſpoſed, took upon himſelf the buſineſs of dictator, by inſiſting vehemently, that, after the king had required the houſe to adjourn, there was no more liberty of ſpeech. This was conteſted, and thoſe who ſtood up demanded ſtill to be heard, when the ſpeaker had the confidence, without putting the queſtion, to pronounce the houſe adjourned; and therewithal ſtepped down in the middle of the floor, leaving the members aſtoniſhed at ſo flagrant a violation of their inherent privileges.

The additional ſum of money ſent from Lewis to Charles in the beginning of the year 1677, to enable the latter to ſoften the oppoſition to his meaſures by the influence of bribery, ſufficiently accounts for the conduct of the parliament, before the alarms from abroad had given the popular party too great an authority with the houſe, and too great a credit with the nation to be reſiſted. In conſequence of the late conteſt with the commons, the French embaſſador had orders to riſe in his offers to keep Charles firm; and a third bargain was ſtruck, in which it was ſtipulated, on the one ſide, that by the exertion of the power of adjourning, proroguing, and diſſolving, the parliament ſhould be no interruption to the progreſs of the French arms, and that Charles ſhould poſitively declare to his allies, that no conſideration whatſoever ſhould be capable of engaging him in the war; on the other, that Lewis ſhould gratify the king with a yearly penſion of two millions of livres. Montague, the Engliſh embaſſador at Paris, having at the ſame time made a better bargain, by obtaining two hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, as the annual price of his maſter's proſtitution, Charles was not aſhamed to retract the agreement made with his own immediate conſent, on the pretence of his great wants, and of his not rightly comprehending the difference between French and Engliſh money.

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The king of England's meanneſs in this reſpect was not the only part of his conduct, which the French court had ſoon reaſon to be diſſatisfied with. The prince of Orange, who had been much diſappointed by the untoward events of the war, began to turn his thoughts towards a marriage with the duke of York's eldeſt daughter, the princeſs Mary. The firſt intimation of his intended viſit to England was diſcouraged by the king, who civilly expreſſed his wiſhes to Mr. Bentinck, the prince's agent, that his highneſs would firſt think of making peace, and defer his journey till it was concluded. But it was fortunate for the prince, upon this occaſion, that he had a powerful advocate at court in the earl of Danby, who cultivated his friendſhip and patronage with the moſt ſedulous attention, in the double view of gaining the prince's party in England, and of forming a balance to the French intereſt in the cabinet council, which was continually puſhing him on the neceſſity of loſing his place, or riſking his head. By the importunate ſolicitations of this miniſter, the point was at length carried: the prince arrived the ninth of October; and by his own conſummate policy, and the joint exertions of the earl of Danby and ſir William Temple, the king was brought to agree to the match, and to propoſe it in ſuch a manner to the duke that he could not eaſily refuſe.

A few days before the marriage was celebrated, Charles took ſome pains to convince the French embaſſador, that this match would diſſipate the ſuſpicions of his ſubjects, and enable him to preſerve, with leſs diſturbance, his alliance with France, adding, that all his difficulties had ariſen from the duke's premature declaration of his religion. After the wedding, letters of ceremony were diſpatched to the French court from the duke and the prince of Orange, and one from the king, in which he aſſured Lewis, that he had made the match in order to engage the prince to be more tractable in the treaty, which was now negociating at Nimeguen. The promiſe was alſo renewed of not recalling the troops; and to qualify, as much as poſſible, the taking ſuch an important ſtep without the expreſs leave of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty, a proclamation was inſerted in the Gazette for adjourning the parliament to April, 1678; as the king had engaged to do in his late bargain with France.

After the matrimonial alliance with the prince of Orange, Charles's councils were for ſome time in a ſtate of almoſt continual fluctuation, as they were ſucceſſively influenced by duplicity, intrigue, avarice, and reſentment. At firſt he ſeemed ready for a war with France, in order to obtain large ſupplies from parliament, and flattered the States with the hope

hope of effectual aſſiſtance, while he was ſecretly bargaining for the ſale or ſacrifice of their intereſts to Lewis. Then irritated by the precarioufneſs or refuſal of his pecuniary demands from his grand pay-maſter, he made in the ſhort fits of fretfulneſs and diſappointment ſome preparations for actual hoſtilities. But all this wavering and diſgraceful conduct ended in giving the artful French monarch an opportunity of almoſt preſcribing his terms to the allied powers, and in rendering the king of England as contemptible in the eyes of all Europe, as he was in the opinion of the moſt diſcerning of his own ſubjects.

One of the French king's principal motives for receiving ſome of Charles's propoſals with coolneſs, and for not being ſo forward to feed his avarice, aroſe from the extraordinary circumſtance of his having gained ſo conſiderable a party in the Engliſh parliament as almoſt enabled him to ſet the king at defiance. The miſguided and more than ſuſpicious conduct of Charles had raiſed ſuch incurable jealouſies in the minds of thoſe who even loved monarchy, yet abhorred an abſolute government, that a kind of mutual intereſt, ariſing from ſimilar views, ſubſiſted at this time between the patriots and the court of France. The former dreaded the ſtrength and the popularity, which a ſtrict union with the prince of Orange would give the king; and that the army, which his majeſty might

might obtain, on the pretence of a popular war, would be employed for the ruin of their liberties: they alſo hoped, that a parliament leſs trained in the corruptions of the court might be more ſafely truſted; and regarding the earl of Danby as a very dangerous miniſter, they aimed at diſplacing him from an office, in which it is always in the power of a daring and diſhoneſt man to be miſchievous. Lewis, on his part, was not leſs intereſted in promoting every one of the ſame objects. He had the ſtrongeſt reaſons for wiſhing to prevent a ſtrict union between the court of England, and the prince of Orange; to have a parliament diſſolved, which had repeatedly addreſſed the king for a war with France; and to overturn a miniſter whoſe influence had produced the prince of Orange's match, and who, on the principles of ſelf-preſervation, muſt be continually urging the king to break off all his French connections.

In conſequence of ſome advances made to Barillon, the French embaſſador, by the patriotic party, he wrote to his maſter that he thought it adviſeable to enter into meaſures with them, as their political views ſo exactly coincided with thoſe of his moſt Chriſtian majeſty. On this hint, Rouvigny, the ſon of the former embaſſador, and who was a near relation to lord Ruſſel, one of the leaders of the oppoſition, was ſent over with a very large ſum of money, to be given as douceurs to thoſe, whoſe

whoſe conduct was not ſolely directed by conſcience, or principle. Can any thing give us a ſtronger idea of the apprehenſions entertained of Charles's deſigns againſt the civil and religious rights of his people, than to ſee the greateſt and beſt men forced to employ even his own inſtruments of corruption to defeat his wicked purpoſes? The conſtitution muſt have been undoubtedly in the moſt imminent danger, when ſuch exalted patriots as Sidney, Ruſſel, Hollis, and Hampden could ſolicit the ſupport of the venal and unprincipled, and even form a connection with the French court, in order to divert thoſe ſupplies, which had, in ſome meaſure, rendered the king independent of his parliament, and to prevent the united force of the two kings from ſubverting the religion and liberties of England.

After the peace, the troops which had been ſent abroad, were brought back to England; and were kept up under the pretence that there was not money to pay them off, though conſiderable ſums had been granted for that purpoſe. It was believed that lord Danby, who, even at the time of the moſt violent and ſucceſsful oppoſition, had often brought his party very near a majority, would order matters in ſuch a manner as ſhould inſure the king's buſineſs in the next ſeſſions of parliament. The country party gave up all for loſt; and many of them

them were determined to forbear their attendance, rather than by a fruitleſs conduct to expoſe themſelves to the fury of government; when a very unexpected accident changed the face of affairs, and united the whole proteſtant intereſt againſt the deſigns of the court.

In the courſe of the Secret Hiſtory we have often ſeen how informers were encouraged, and the alarm of conſpiracies kept up, in order to ſecure from parliament a readier acquieſcence in various ſchemes of perſecution and tyranny. The ſame wicked arts were at length turned againſt the original inventors; and the fabrication of a plot, in which all the papiſts were ſaid to be engaged for the overthrow of the eſtabliſhed religion and government, threw the whole nation into a ferment, and rendered the popular party for ſome time irreſiſtible.

During this agitation of men's minds, the groſſeſt impoſtures, and the moſt abſurd fictions were admitted as facts; and many perſons ſuffered upon evidence alike queſtionable for the infamy of the witneſſes, and the contradictions in their teſtimony. But this deluſion of the times, though fatal to a few perhaps innocent individuals, was undoubtedly ſerviceable to the nation at large, as it checked the progreſs of thoſe meaſures, in which the

the king and his brother were ſo deeply engaged, and for which their blood alone, and that of their criminal agents ought to have been ſhed by the ſword of public juſtice.

When the tide ran ſo ſtrongly againſt the papiſts, the popular party found no great difficulty in getting a bill paſſed for diſabling all perſons of that perſuaſion from ſitting in either houſe. This bill contained a teſt to be taken by every member, in which tranſubſtantiation was renounced, and image-worſhip was declared to be idolatrous. The only exception admitted into the bill was in favour of the duke of York, who, on its being debated in the houſe of lords, told them with tears in his eyes, that he was now to caſt himſelf on their kindneſs, in the greateſt concern which he could have in the world; and proteſted, that whatever his religion might be, it ſhould only be a private matter between God and his own ſoul, and never ſhould appear in his public conduct. This condeſcenſion had its effect; and the duke carried his point by three voices.

The patriots were not ſo ſucceſsful in an attempt they made to recover a privilege, which the intoxication of royalty, joined to the influence of corruption and intrigue, had prompted them inconſiderably to ſurrender, ſoon after the king's recal from exile. They now paſſed a bill, by which it

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was enacted, that a regular militia ſhould be kept in arms during ſix weeks of the year, and a third part of them to do duty every fortnight of that time. But Charles peremptorily refuſed his aſſent, and told the parliament, that he would not, were it for half an hour, part ſo far with the power of the ſword; but he offered to paſs any other bill for ordering the militia, provided it was left in his option to aſſemble, or diſmiſs them, as he thought proper. The commons were enraged at the king's ſuſpicions; and in order to ſhew that no danger to the liberties of the conſtitution could be equal to the power of the ſword in the hands of the crown, declined accepting a militia-act on the king's plan; and, notwithſtanding one of the witneſſes in the popiſh plot had ſworn to intended invaſions from abroad, the houſe voted, that all the new raiſed levies ſhould be diſbanded; and becauſe the money granted in the laſt year for diſbanding the army was employed for keeping it up, in their preſent bill of ſupply for the ſame purpoſe, they not only appropriated the money by the ſtricteſt clauſes, but ordered it to be paid into the chamber of London. The lords were ſtartled at a clauſe, which threw ſo ſevere a reflection on the king and his miniſters; and, in behalf of the crown, ventured to interfere in what the commons had ſo often claimed as their undiſputed privilege, the granting of money in their own way: they raiſed doubts, and propoſed amendments, which were all rejected;

rejected; and thus the important buſineſs of diſbanding the army hung in ſuſpenſe.

Another difference at this time took place between both houſes, on a ſubject, which led to the prorogation, and ſoon after to the diſſolution of a parliament that began, too late, to repair the fatal effects of its paſt folly and baſeneſs. Montague, the negociator of ſome of the ſecret treaties with France, was lately returned from Paris, though in oppoſition to the king's commands; and having ſecured a ſeat in parliament, he loſt no time in exhibiting charges of high treaſon againſt the earl of Danby, founded chiefly on the inſtructions ſent by that miniſter to Montague, reſpecting thoſe criminal bargains *. One of the diſpatches, which was

* This extraordinary conduct was owing to the following circumſtances. Montague had expected to obtain the office of ſecretary of ſtate, as a reward for his ſervices at the court of France; but having reaſon to ſuppoſe that his diſappointment aroſe from the lord treaſurer's jealouſy of him, he meditated the fall of that miniſter. His firſt attempt was to bribe an aſtrologer, in whoſe predictions Charles had great faith, to foretel the king's ruin, if he continued the treaſurer in his office. But he did not keep his own ſecret. Lady Caſtlemaine, who, upon Charles's perferring the French ſultana to the firſt place in his ſeraglio, had retired with the title of ducheſs of Cleveland, took up her reſidence in France. There Montague formed a very intimate connection with her; and in an unguarded moment diſcloſed to her his ſcheme to bring about Danby's diſgrace, and took great freedoms with the character of the king and his brother.

was produced, being ſigned by Charles himſelf, afforded equal evidence of the king's guilt, and very much inflamed the indignation of the commons. They immediately voted an impeachment of the miniſter; but when the articles were carried up to the bar of the lords, a poſitive refuſal was given to the requeſt for his being ordered to withdraw, and for his being committed. This obſtruction of public juſtice was defended on the pretence that his charge was not within the ſtatute of the twenty-fifth of Edward III. The earl made a ſpeech, in which he endeavoured to refute ſome of the leſs important articles; but with reſpect to the weighty charges of his having betrayed the intereſts of the nation, he urged the unconſtitutional plea of obedience to the king's commands. His majeſty, who was preſent on this occaſion, and who knew that any farther proſecution of this buſineſs would unmaſk his own infamy to the world, availed himſelf of the diſpute between both houſes on the point of privilege, and in a few days prorogued them with a ſpeech that gave ſufficient

ther. Finding afterwards, that he was betrayed by the ducheſs, and that he could expect no more favours from the court, he reſolved to impeach the miniſter; and knowing how agreeable his downfal would be to the court of France, he had the addreſs to bargain with the French embaſſador for a gratuity of one hundred thouſand crowns, or a penſion of fifty thouſand livres a year, during his life, provided the ruin of the treaſurer, by a parliamentary proſecution, ſhould take place at the end of three months.

warning

warning of their political death, which was announced about three weeks after by proclamation.

The manner in which this parliament assisted the king; the pretences they gave him to break the solemn promises he had made at Breda, in the persecution of the non-conformists; and their long continued compliance with the crown, to the weakening, if not the total subversion of the free principles of the constitution, have rendered them peculiarly odious to the friends of civil and religious liberty; and as bribery began with them, and was then reduced to a system, it has justly secured to them the opprobrious name of the PENSION PARLIAMENT.

As the whole nation was too much inflamed with resentment at the conduct of the court, to afford any prospect of the return of members less favourable to the cause of liberty than those which composed the last parliament, it was, in all probability, intended, on the dissolution of that assembly, either to govern without parliaments, or to awe these subordinate estates into a perfect submission to the king's measures, through the terror of a military force. The duke of York proposed to Barillon that the army should be kept on foot, notwithstanding the resolutions of parliament to dissolve it; and that to facilitate this end, the union between Lewis and his brother should be renewed.

Charles alſo made overtures to the ſame purport in terms very mean and ſubmiſſive. He aſſured the embaſſador, that it would give him the higheſt pleaſure to owe his ſafety and preſervation entirely to the king of France; and that he would not refuſe any conditions, which his moſt Chriſtian majeſty ſhould impoſe. The caution of Lewis was again propitious to the liberties of England. Barillon inſiſted on the diſbanding of the army as a neceſſary preliminary to the obtaining any ſupplies from France; and Charles, who could neither ſupport, nor diſband his troops, without the aſſiſtance of France, or of his people, was reduced to the neceſſity of ſummoning a new parliament.

It was at this period that the court firſt intereſted itſelf in a very open, a very dangerous, and a very unconſtitutional degree, in the choice of the national repreſentatives. But all its efforts were fruitleſs. The members returned were chiefly of the country intereſt; and it was found neceſſary to make ſome condeſcenſions towards gratifying and appeaſing the people, before the meeting of this formidable aſſembly. Two expreſs motions had been made in the laſt parliament by lord Ruſſel, againſt the duke of York: the one was for an addreſs to his majeſty, that his royal highneſs might be removed from his preſence and councils; and the other, that the opinion the papiſts have of the duke's being for them, and of their religion, was

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the cauſe of the plot. The duke, ſenſible of his own unpopularity, and apprehenſive of the conſequences, had taken occaſion to declare in the houſe of lords, that ſince he had found ſome particular perſons were offended at his appearing in the committee of foreign affairs, and at his meeting among the lords of the admiralty, he would, for their ſatisfaction, hereafter forbear. The duke's ſpeech was accompanied with a declaration from the king, circulated by the earl of Danby, That his majeſty was willing that ſomething ſhould be enacted to leſſen the power of a popiſh ſucceſſor; but that he would never ſuffer his brother to be taken away from him, or the right line of ſucceſſion to be interrupted. This offer, which did not come up to the expectations of the houſe, was rejected; and the king was perſuaded by the earl of Danby to oblige his brother to give way to the ſtorm, and to quit the kingdom.

The duke of York complied, though with the greater reluctance as he left behind him a dreaded competitor for the crown in the duke of Monmouth, the king's ſon by Lucy Walters. The peculiar marks of fondneſs, with which this ſon was diſtinguiſhed, even when a child, have been mentioned in the SECRET HISTORY*; nor did his majeſty's affection for him leſſen as he grew up.

* See page 451, vol. i.

He was raiſed to the higheſt military honours in the ſtate; and being poſſeſſed of all thoſe ſpecious qualifications and external endowments, which captivate the multitude, he ſoon became a very great favourite with the people. The moſt plauſible reports of his mother's having been married to the king were ſpread abroad, and were greedily received by a great part of the nation. The earl of Shafteſbury and ſeveral members of both houſes countenanced his pretenſions; and the king himſelf, from motives of policy, that he might have an opportunity to ſift the deſigns of party, to diſtract their councils, and multiply the objects of their attention, ſometimes appeared to flatter him in thoſe ambitious views, which in the end proved fatal to his life. But at the time of the duke of York's being obliged to withdraw, Charles, in order to quiet his brother's fears and jealouſies, and to deſtroy the hopes formed by ſome of Monmouth's partiſans of encouragement from the king, made a declaration in full council of Monmouth's illegitimacy, and denied all promiſe of marriage with his mother.

On the opening of the new parliament, Charles took care to inform them of his having commanded the abſence of his brother; a ſtep, he ſaid, he had taken to diſcern whether the proteſtant religion and the peace of the kingdom were as truly intended by others as they were aimed at by himſelf;

ſelf; for if they were, the parliament would employ their time upon the great concerns of the nation, and not be drawn to promote private animoſities under public pretences. He boaſted alſo of the zeal he had ſhewn in diſcovering and puniſhing all perſons concerned in the popiſh plot, and of his readineſs to join in making ſuch farther laws as might be neceſſary to ſecure the kingdom againſt popery. He then deſired their aſſiſtance in the neceſſary ſupplies, to diſband the army, to pay off the fleet, to make up the deficiencies in the poll bill, and to diſcharge the anticipations on the revenue.

His majeſty's rhetoric had no longer any perſuaſive power. The new parliament ſeemed determined to take up the principal matters which were left depending by their predeceſſors; and, on the buſineſs of ſupplies, they only prepared a bill for an aid ſufficient to enable the king to diſband the army, and were careful to appropriate their grant to that purpoſe by the ſtricteſt clauſes. Even whilſt this matter was before the houſe, the commons paſſed a vote, that all the forces then on foot were kept up contrary to law; and when it was objected that the king's guards, and the garriſons of Portſmouth and other places would be included, it was anſwered, "that kings governing according to law had no need of *cuſtodia corporis*; and that it was better to have no garriſons at all, than

ſuch as were commanded by Legg, Holmes, and their peers."

Sir William Temple, who, on the unavoidable removal of the earl of Danby, had been complimented with the ſhew of royal favour, propoſed the plan of ſome changes in adminiſtration, as neceſſary to regain the confidence of parliament. In compliance with this advice, the king admitted the leaders of oppoſition into his council, but took care, at the ſame time, that they were ſo equally balanced by perſons devoted to the prerogative, that his own weight on either ſide ſhould turn the ſcale as he pleaſed. Such a ſhallow deception was not likely to remove the jealouſies, or to diſpel the gloomy apprehenſions entertained of a popiſh ſucceſſor. The commons ſoon diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a bill for the excluſion of the duke of York from inheriting the crown; by an addreſs againſt the duke of Lauderdale, whoſe government of Scotland was marked with all the horrors of oppreſſion and blood; by inſiſting on the illegality and nullity of the king's pardon, granted to ſhield the earl of Danby from impeachment; by reſuming and perfecting the Habeas Corpus Bill; by laying the axe to the root of bribery and corruption in their own members; and by ſeveral other public ſpirited meaſures, in ſome of which they were defeated by the oppoſition of the lords, and in others by the king's proroguing them, ſo that

that the Habeas Corpus Act, and the commitment of Danby were the chief points which they were able to accompliſh.

At this time Charles, rendered almoſt deſperate by the inflexible firmneſs of the commons, and by the poverty of the exchequer, renewed his advances to Lewis, and even went ſo far as to offer *to put England for ever under the dependence of France*. Barillon, the French embaſſador, who had as great a ſuſpicion of Charles's integrity as any of his ſubjects, and who, as before hinted, was engaged in intrigues with the popular party, always adviſed his maſter not to truſt to the king's promiſes, or advance any ſum of money till the army was diſbanded. At length, however, the court of France began to fear, that from the obſtinacy of the parliament, and the indigence of the king, the duke of York would be excluded from the ſucceſſion, and the crown devolve either to the prince of Orange, who was a profeſſed enemy to France, or to the duke of Monmouth, who would be led by his popular engagements to act in oppoſition to its intereſts. A new bargain was therefore ſet on foot to the following purport; that the duke of York was to be recalled; that the king was not to aſſemble a parliament for the ſpace of three years; that neither party ſhould enter into treaties prejudicial to each other; that Lewis ſhould not

attack Flanders; and that Charles ſhould have a penſion.

While attempts were making to adjuſt the terms of this compact, the king was taken ill, upon which the duke of York was ſent for with great ſecrecy and diſpatch. Finding upon his arrival the king recovered, he did not make any long ſtay at Windſor, and in about three weeks returned to Bruſſels, as if to continue there. But the proſpect of a treaty with France had prompted the king to adopt new counſels more favourable to the duke's wiſhes. He firſt gratified him by ſending away his favourite ſon in diſgrace to the continent; and he ſoon yielded to his perſuaſions in other matters of ſtill greater importance. Charles had ſome time before diſſolved the parliament, who had given him ſo much offence in their firſt and only ſeſſions. He had alſo called another; but as, from the nature of the returns, he did not think it of a very ductile complexion, two days before its meeting, he declared in council his reſolution to prorogue it for a twelvemonth, and would not hear any advice to the contrary.

It ſoon appeared what were the king's motives for diſguſting his new parliament by ſo long a prorogation, before the temper of this aſſembly could be poſitively known. The public were informed by the Gazette, that the duke of York had aſked leave

leave to reſide in his majeſty's dominions, rather than in thoſe of any other prince: and his royal highneſs, attended by his family, ſoon after made his ſecond appearance at Whitehall, in his way to Edinburgh. All the popular members of the council reſigned. A few others, who had ſhewn themſelves very willing tools, finding that they were only the dupes of more truſted confidants, thought proper to retire; and the chief management of public affairs remained in the hands of the earl of Sunderland, an ambitious and intriguing man; Mr. Lawrence Hyde, the younger ſon of the late earl of Clarendon *, who far from reſenting the king's ungrateful treatment of his father, had riſen into favour by the moſt aſſiduous ſervility; and Mr. Sidney Godolphin, who was bred a page of honour, and who, according to lord chief juſtice North, had abilities ſo well ſuited to flouriſh in a court-ſoil, that his preferment was in a manner certain, from the moment he got within its circle.

The concluſion of the French treaty, on which the king depended for ſupplies, after having in ſome meaſure diſcarded the aſſiſtance, as well as the advice of his parliament, had been ſome time ſuſpended by an uncertainty of the French king's

* The earl died at Rouen, on the ninth of December, 1674, after an exile of little more than ſeven years.

councils;

councils; and the bargain was at length broken off, on the farther encroachments of this monarch, who treating the king of England as a vaſſal, rather than an equal, would have tied him up from making any alliances prejudicial to the intereſts of France, at the ſame time that he refuſed to be bound by ſimilar obligations. Charles would probably have ſubmitted to the terms preſcribed, had not Sunderland, who began to entertain terrible apprehenſions on the conſequences which he might incur from being made a party in the treaty, and Hyde, to whom the ſecret was alſo communicated, ſtrongly repreſented the dangers, which a miniſter muſt run, who ſubmitted to ſuch an inequality, and, by refuſing their concurrence, put a period to the negociation.

It is aſſerted by ſome writers, that the popular party had got intelligence of the treaty on foot between both courts; and that the duke of Buckingham had the merit of diſappointing the king of any ſupplies from France, by repairing to Paris, and repreſenting to the French miniſters, that they would throw their money away in giving it to Charles, who was not in a ſituation to do them good or harm. However this may be, the interruption of the bargain produced a temporary change in the king's ever fluctuating meaſures. The meeting of a parliament was now become neceſſary; and Charles and his miniſters, in order to acquire ſome degree

degree of popularity, formed an alliance with Spain; offered a renewal of the alliances with Holland; and obliged the duke of York, who had been recalled from Scotland, to return thither again.

When a prince has repeatedly and groſſly abuſed the confidence of a generous people, it is almoſt beyond the power of any diſſimulation, or artifice to regain it. Charles had ample reaſon to be convinced of this truth in the defeat of all his efforts to cajole the new parliament. In vain did he endeavour to give a popular turn to the long diſcontinuance of the national councils, by ſaying that he had made a good uſe of the time in taking meaſures with Spain and Portugal for mutual ſuccour and defence: in vain did he urge the proſecution of the popiſh plot, and ſoon after acquieſce in the addition of lord Stafford to many former victims, as if with a view of ſurfeiting the appetite of the popular party by frequent executions: in vain did he renew the aſſurances of his zeal for the proteſtant religion, and of his readineſs to concur in whatever might tend to give it ſecurity: in vain did he accompany the demand of ſupplies with a declaration, that he valued a perfect union at home beyond all the treaſure in the world: the commons were not to be amuſed by any profeſſions, nor ſatisfied with any ſacrifice ſhort of the duke of York's excluſion from all right to the crown. The oppoſition

oppoſition they met with on this point from the king and the lords increaſed their fears and prejudices. They came to ſome very violent reſolutions *, which made the king immediately prorogue, and in eight days after diſſolve them †;

* They declared it to be the opinion of the houſe, that there could be no ſecurity or ſafety for the proteſtant religion, the king's life, or the government of the nation, without paſſing a bill for diſinheriting the duke of York; and that all perſons who had adviſed his majeſty againſt the bill were enemies to the king and kingdom. They peremptorily refuſed to grant any ſupply till ſuch a bill ſhould be paſſed; and in order to prevent the large anticipations which had been often made on the revenue, and to ſhut out, if poſſible, all expedients tending to render the king independent of parliament, they reſolved, that whoever ſhould hereafter lend, or cauſe to be lent, by way of advance, any money upon any branches of the revenue, ſhould be adjudged a hinderer of the ſitting of parliaments, and be reſponſible for the ſame in parliament. Upon hearing that the king was privately gone to the houſe of lords to prorogue them, they voted that the adviſer of ſuch a meaſure was a betrayer of the king, of the proteſtant religion, and of the kingdom of England, a promoter of the French intereſt, and a penſioner to France. They employed the few remaining moments of their authority in paſſing ſome other reſolutions with more heat than diſcretion, or effect.

† Charles, fearing the indignation of the commons, ſneaked with the utmoſt ſecrecy to the houſe of lords, on the tenth of January 1681, and prorogued them in the midſt of their reſolutions. He alſo eluded at the ſame time an act for the relief of proteſtant diſſenters, by a juggle highly worthy of ſo cowardly, but ſhameleſs a tyrant. Not daring openly to reject it, he privately ordered the clerk of the crown to withdraw it, ſo that, after having paſſed both houſes, it was not preſented for the royal aſſent.

and

and as, before this laſt ſtep was taken, the lord mayor, and common council of London had preſented an humble addreſs, that his majeſty would be graciouſly pleaſed to ſuffer his parliament to ſit at the time to which it was prorogued, he not only told them, "that the ſitting of parliaments was none of their buſineſs," but farther to expreſs his reſentment againſt the city, he ordered, in his writs, the next parliament to meet at Oxford.

Sixteen peers, with the duke of Monmouth at their head, petitioned the king againſt an innovation calculated to increaſe the terrors of the public, and to inflame the paſſions of the people. They intimated that the friends of religion and liberty were not ſafe to aſſemble in a place ſo remote from the great ſeat of the proteſtant intereſt, and where they might be maſſacred even by the popiſh ſoldiers in the king's guards. Charles's deſigns were too deeply laid to pay any regard to the petition and advice of thoſe peers; and the real or the pretended apprehenſions of the popular leaders became ſo prevalent, that they attended the king's ſummons at Oxford, accompanied by their ſervants in arms, and numerous bands of their partiſans. The four city members in particular were followed by great multitudes wearing ribbons, in which were diſplayed the words, "No popery, no ſlavery." The king had the hirelings of the court and his own guards regularly muſtered; and thus the aſ-

ſembly

ſembly at Oxford carried the appearance of a tumultuous Poliſh diet, rather than of a regular meeting of the Engliſh legiſlature.

Inſtead of thoſe gracious expreſſions which had formerly wheedled the commons out of large ſums of money, and what was ſtill worſe, out of their own power and importance, the king, aſſuming an authoritative air, told the parliament on their meeting at Oxford *, that the unwarrantable proceedings of the laſt houſe of commons was the reaſon of his parting with them; for that he, *who would never uſe arbitrary power himſelf*, would never ſuffer it in others. This was intended as a menace of what the preſent houſe might expect, if they perſiſted in their oppoſition to the court. He then made a merit of his having called another parliament ſo ſoon, to let them ſee, as he pretended, that no paſt irregularities ſhould make him out of love with them, and to give one evidence more that he had not neglected his part, but had given them another opportunity of providing for the public ſecurity. He omitted, he ſaid, to preſs them on the farther proſecution of the popiſh plot, as being obvious to conſideration, and neceſſary for the public ſafety; but as to what he had often declared on preſerving the right of ſucceſſion inviolate, he

* This laſt parliament in Charles's reign met on the 21ſt of March 1681, and was diſſolved in a week after.

ſhould

ſhould not depart from it: yet in order to remove all reaſonable fears of what might ariſe from a popiſh ſucceſſor, if means could be found that in ſuch a caſe the adminiſtration ſhould remain in proteſtant hands; he declared he ſhould be ready to hearken to any ſuch expedient, by which religion might be ſecured, and monarchy not deſtroyed.

This laſt propoſal was founded in a deep and ſubtle plan of the moſt wicked policy: it was deſigned to put a falſe gloſs on the king's meaſures; to throw all the odium of public diſcord on the ſeeming unreaſonableneſs of the commons; to deſtroy that combination of intereſts between the members of the eſtabliſhed church and the diſſenters, which the terrors of popery had at firſt occaſioned; and to miſlead and corrupt the judgments of the people at large on the conduct of their repreſentatives

William Williams, the ſpeaker of the laſt houſe of commons, and the only one in Charles's reign, who maintained the authority of the houſe with zeal and vigour, was again choſen into that high office; and to ſhew that his maſters were rather rouſed than awed by the lofty tone of his majeſty's ſpeech, he declared before the throne, that the commons had elected him to be their ſpeaker,

to

to manifeſt to their ſovereign and the world, that they were not inclinable to changes.

The firſt ſteps taken by the commons were to appoint a committee to inſpect the former proceedings relative to the impeachment of the earl of Danby; to demand a conference with the lords on the manner, in which the bill for repealing the ſanguinary ſtatute of the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth had been loſt the laſt parliament; and to examine the evidence of one Fitzharris, who having been detected in an attempt to fix a libel on the popular party, turned ſhort upon the court, and made ſeveral diſcoveries of its ſecret machinations. But theſe were only preludes to a debate on the important queſtion, which had ſo long occupied the attention of contending parties. After the neceſſity of excluding the duke of York had been ſtrongly enforced by ſome of the ableſt ſpeakers, one of the king's miniſters propoſed, that he ſhould be baniſhed during life five hundred miles from England; and that on the king's demiſe the next heir ſhould be conſtituted regent, with regal power. This expedient, which left the duke the title of king, whilſt it ſeemed to deprive him of all advantages annexed to that character, was regarded as a jeſuitical ſnare, and accordingly treated with contempt. It was ſaid, that if one army ſhould be neceſſary to maintain the excluſion, four would be as neceſſary to maintain this expedient; and thoſe, who

who propoſed it, would have the ſame power to let the duke in, as to keep him out. The debate ended like all the preceding ones on this ſubject, and it was declared, that no method but the bill of excluſion could be properly adopted by the houſe, becauſe no other method could give any ſatisfaction, or ſecurity to the people whom they repreſented.

As the king, to cut off all correſpondence between Fitzharris and the popular party, had removed him to the Tower, the commons, in the way of a counter-ſtratagem to take the priſoner out of the hands of the crown, voted an impeachment againſt him; but this was rejected by the lords, who reſolved, that the ſaid Fitzharris ſhould be proceeded againſt in the ordinary courts of juſtice. A violent quarrel now broke out between the two houſes, which furniſhed the king with a pretence for diſſolving them. His intention was kept ſo profound a ſecret, in order to prevent the juſtly dreaded reproaches of any parting votes, that none of the popular members had the leaſt hint of it, till they ſaw the black rod appear with a meſſage preparatory to their diſſolution.

The party, who by a variety of means had been flattered into an aſſurance that the king was not ſo averſe to the bill of excluſion as he pretended, and that his neceſſities would reduce him to a com-

pliance with their own terms, were deprived of all ſpirit by this unexpected meaſure. They were convinced that the king had by ſome ſecret bargain opened new reſources in France, to ſupply his wants independent of parliament; and they foreſaw very clearly, that, during the diſcontinuance of their aſſemblies, the authority of the crown, aſſiſted by the efforts of a fierce and unrelenting faction, would have every advantage over a body diſperſed and diſunited. Full of theſe dark proſpects, and unprovided with any plan or ſyſtem of conduct to put into immediate execution, on ſuch an exigence of affairs, they hurried out of Oxford in a manner which fully ſhewed their apprehenſions of the violence of the king's councils to be equal to what they repreſented in their ſeveral votes and addreſſes. The king, on his part, was not leſs fearful that reſentment and deſpair might prompt ſome of the moſt daring of the excluſioniſts to have recourſe to force. After having, therefore, with a blaſt of his breath, to uſe the language of the royaliſt writers, reduced the repreſentatives of the commons of England to a ſtate of inſignificance, and ſcattered his foes like the leaves of autumn, he took coach, and drove to Windſor, from which place he iſſued out a royal declaration, to blacken the conduct of the two laſt parliaments, and to inſinuate himſelf into the eſteem and affections of a deluded people. But the baſeneſs of his calumnies and the fallacy of his profeſſions were

expoſed

expoſed with the utmoſt ſpirit and judgment in a pamphlet entitled, "A modeſt Vindication of the two laſt Parliaments," which is ſaid to have been written by the illuſtrious pens of Sidney, Somers, and Jones.

The conjecture of the popular party, that Charles muſt have opened new reſources to make himſelf independent of parliamentary aids, was well founded. The treaty with France, which had been broken off by the timidity of Sunderland and Hyde, was afterwards revived by the king himſelf, who choſe to ſubmit to every condition which Lewis ſhould impoſe, rather than give up to the national repreſentatives any point that might lead to the limitation of his power. The duke of York, who, upon his forced return to Scotland, had been frantic enough to court the king of France's aſſiſtance to involve the three kingdoms in a civil war *, was

* It appears from the French embaſſador's letters to Lewis XIV. that the duke of York, before his return to Scotland, ſtrove to perſuade his brother, that a civil war was the only means of eſtabliſhing the royal authority in England. But as Charles was very averſe to ſo dangerous an experiment, the duke, before his departure for the north, expreſſed to Barillon his hopes of being able to excite troubles in Scotland and Ireland, and aſſerted that he had a much more conſiderable party in England than was thought of. He therefore earneſtly ſolicited the French king's help, and was promiſed it; but it is probable, that the cautious temper of colonel Churchill, the duke's principal confidant, checked theſe intemperate ſallies.

was now overjoyed to find the ſecret negociation again opened, and did not fail to urge both his brother and the French embaſſador by the moſt preſſing importunities to bring it to a concluſion. This long depending bargain was finally ſettled on the twenty-fourth of March, 1681, juſt after Charles had felt the pulſe of the commons at Oxford, and three or four days before he diſſolved the parliament, with a reſolution never to call another. The ſtipulations of the treaty were, that Charles ſhould receive a penſion of two millions of livres for one year, and five hundred thouſand crowns for two others, in conſideration of his diſengaging himſelf by degrees from the Spaniſh alliance, and of his taking meaſures to prevent parliaments from counteracting his promiſed ſervices to France. In the courſe of a few months, he eluded the agreement entered into with Spain; and, for a bribe of another million of livres, abandoned to Lewis the duchy of Luxemburgh, ſo important on account of its being the key to Germany, and one of the chief barriers of the Low Countries. He alſo ſuf-

The ſubtle, but deteſtable policy, with which Lewis at this time endeavoured to profit by the diviſions in England, is really aſtoniſhing. By the verſatility, or rather the perfidy of his intrigues he kept up an intereſt in every party, and almoſt in the ſame breath gave directions for encouraging the duke of York in his mad deſigns; for tempting the king, by aſſurances of ſupport, to maintain a firm and bold conduct to his ſubjects; and for amuſing the republican party with promiſes, that he would protect the privileges of the nation.

fered

fered the French monarch the year after to ſeize the principality of Orange on the moſt frivolous claim, though the prince had been flattered with the hope of effectual interpoſition on the part of England in defence of his right; but his faithleſs uncle very readily ſacrificed all foreign intereſts to Lewis's ambition, in return for the aſſiſtance received from the latter to ſupport his domeſtic tyranny.

Every thing ſeemed now to promiſe Charles the full enjoyment of that deſpotic authority, which he had been ſo long endeavouring to eſtabliſh. The Tory party, grown more rancorous by the mutual provocations which accompany a long ſtruggle for power, and elevated with the general opinion that his majeſty would never ſummon another parliament, exceeded all the bounds of decency and common ſenſe, in their triumph over the Whigs. Principles of the moſt ſlaviſh nature were every where enforced from the pulpit, and adopted in numerous addreſſes, which flattered the king in his preſent meaſures, and congratulated him on his eſcape from parliaments. Every day, from the middle of May to the January following, produced an acceſſion of theſe diſgraceful offerings; and though a few members of the community, particularly the citizens of London, and the freeholders of Middleſex, were bold enough to contradict and diſclaim ſuch ſurrenders of the rights

of Engliſhmen, yet their efforts were inſufficient to ſtem the tide of barbarous ſervility, which threatened the deſtruction of every thing valuable in the conſtitution, or rational in the opinion and manners of the people.

Soon after the diſſolution of the Oxford parliament, and the concluſion of the French treaty, the duke of York was recalled *, and a regular plan was concerted between the two brothers for obtaining the fulleſt revenge on all their paſt opponents, and for levelling to the ground the few bulwarks of freedom which popular infatuation had not yet deſtroyed. The diſſenters, who were peculiarly obnoxious for having aided and abetted the ſchemes of the excluſioniſts, were the firſt who experienced the power and reſentment of the court. The act of the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth, the repeal of which Charles had eluded by ſo ſcandalous a trick, was now enforced with the utmoſt rigour, and every other effort was uſed by the ſubornation of witneſſes, and the profligate corruptions of the bench, to fix charges of treaſon on thoſe, who, by their ſpirited conduct had made themſelves moſt

* The duke did not at this time continue long in England; but having ſettled with the king the plan of future operations, he again returned, at his own requeſt, to Scotland, in quality of commiſſioner, to give the laſt finiſhing to that ſyſtem of undiſguiſed tyranny, which Lauderdale had for ſo many years purſued with the moſt ſanguinary violence.

offenſive.

offenſive. But though ſome victims bled, and though the blind zeal of the eſtabliſhed clergy and of the Tory faction aſſiſted the career of tyranny and intolerance, yet it was found that the complete ſuppreſſion of the oppoſite party, and a total command of the life as well as of the civil and religious liberty of the ſubject could not be acquired, while the city of London and other corporations retained the right of chuſing their own magiſtrates. The invaſion of their charters was therefore reſolved upon, as the only ſtep which was ſtill requiſite for the final eſtabliſhment of deſpotiſm.

Before the particular mode of effecting this laſt purpoſe could be ſettled by the crown-lawyers, a lord-mayor and ſheriffs were forced upon the city, and the return of ſuch juries was ſecured, as were not likely to interrupt or delay the work of perſecution. Theſe men, picked for the baſe purpoſes of cruelty, and void of every ſentiment of humanity and common honeſty, ſhewed themſelves worthy of ſuch a choice by the unparalleled rigour of their verdicts. They regarded Magna Charta and the laws of the land as little as they did their own oaths; and purſued no other line of duty than a criminal compliance with the dictates and wiſhes of their ſuperiors.

But a partial violation of the rights of the citizens in the choice of their civil officers did not fill

up the meaſure of the ſlavery to which they were doomed: it only ſerved as the means of temporary oppreſſion, while a formidable attack on all their privileges was preparing. It was now pretended, that the city of London might legally be deprived of its franchiſes, on account of two offences, which the court of aldermen and common-council had committed, firſt in the words of one of their former petitions to the king for the ſitting of parliament, in which the prorogation was repreſented as an interruption of the public juſtice of the kingdom; and ſecondly in impoſing a toll on goods brought to market, which was done in order to defray the expence of rebuilding the markets after the great fire. The ſolemn mockery of a trial was added to this flagrant injuſtice; and on ſuch frivolous charges the court of king's bench gave ſentence againſt the city. Its charter became forfeited; and though the independence of its government and the free election of its magiſtrates were thus deſtroyed, the courtiers had the inſolence to boaſt of the king's clemency in not ſetting up an exchequer for its revenue, or granting a commiſſion as upon an eſcheat to the crown.

The ſucceſs of this attack on the charter of the metropolis encouraged the court to proceed in a ſimilar manner againſt every other city and borough in England. Quo Warrantos, or writs were iſſued out to oblige them to ſhew by what title they

they enjoyed their reſpective franchiſes. The pretenſions of ſome were ſaid to be illegal and defective: others had infringed the conditions of the original grant: and a great number were tempted to ſurrender their charters at the king's diſcretion, rather than riſk the conſequences of ſo iniquitous a ſcrutiny. Conſiderable ſums were exacted for a pretended renewal of former immunities; but all offices of power and profit were kept at the diſpoſal of the crown; a precedent which left no national privilege in ſecurity; and as it enabled the king to pack juries, and even to model parliaments at pleaſure, it effected at one blow the ruin of all conſtitutional freedom.

While the court party were employing with fatal ſucceſs all thoſe wicked arts in England to rivet the chains of the people, and to convert the very forms of their ancient government into engines of irreſiſtible oppreſſion, tyranny threw off the maſk in Scotland: it ſtalked abroad with undiſguiſed horror; and its traces were every where marked with blood. Ireland had long been in a ſtate of abſolute vaſſalage, and was much more likely to promote than oppoſe the diffuſion of ſlavery through the whole extent of the Britiſh empire. At this gloomy period, a band of choſen patriots, who had oppoſed the conduct of adminiſtration in a legal way, as long as there remained any authority in the laws, and energy in the conſtitution,

now

now prepared to ſeek relief by that ſolemn appeal to the ſword, which is the duty of every citizen, when the voice of freedom is ſilenced by the power of oppreſſion.

Cowardice is very ingenious in giving the ſhew of moderation and wiſdom to counſels dictated by the dread of perſonal danger. Though the alarming progreſs of arbitrary power was evident to every man who was not blinded by prejudice, bigotry, or corruption, yet the timid and cautious argued, that while ſo large a faction adhered to the crown, reſiſtance, however juſtifiable, was not expedient; and that an unſucceſsful rebellion would precipitate the nation into all thoſe evils, which it was intended to redreſs. Such reaſoning had very little weight with the only illuſtrious individuals, whom England could then boaſt of. Lord Ruſſel, more dignified by the rectitude of his morals, and the amiableneſs of his manners, than by the nobility of his birth; lord Eſſex, whom power could not corrupt, and who reſigned the higheſt poſts in the ſtate, when he found they were to be held only by baſeneſs; Hamden, who glowed with that generous flame of liberty, by which his grandfather had acquired immortal honour; and Algernon Sidney, whoſe elevated ſentiments, conduct, and literary talents have added luſtre to a long train of nobles and heroes, from whom he derived his deſcent, were of opinion, that the duty, which they owed

owed their country, called upon them to make uſe of the preſent opportunity to deſtroy a tyranny, which was now only beginning to collect ſtrength, but which time and a regular military force would confirm beyond the poſſibility of being oppoſed with ſucceſs.

There were ſeveral others united in the ſame counſels, but to whom we cannot aſcribe the ſame pure and diſintereſted motives; the duke of Monmouth, the earl of Shafteſbury, lord Grey, and lord Howard. The city of London, with the gentry and nobility in ſeveral counties of England, were ſolicited to riſe in arms; and the citizens, inflamed by Shafteſbury and his agents, ſeemed full of ardour and impatience to begin. But the duke of Monmouth, who knew well the inferiority even of a multitude of raw men to a ſmall number of diſciplined troops, ſaid, that, to inſure ſucceſs, the inſurrection ſhould be begun in the country, which, by drawing the attention of the king's forces, would afford an advantageous opportunity for riſing in the city. Shafteſbury, on the contrary, exclaimed loudly againſt delay; and repreſented to his confederates, that having gone ſo far, and truſted the ſecret to ſo many hands, there was no ſafety for them but in a bold proſecution of their purpoſe. The earl finding his arguments ineffectual loſt all patience; endeavoured to blaſt the character of the patriots with the party in the city; threatened

threatened to put himſelf at the head of the inſurgents; and at laſt, in a fit of deſpair, fled to Holland, where the violent agitation of his unruly paſſions, which had already diſordered his mind, occaſioned his death about ſix weeks after.

The retreat of Shafteſbury, as it broke off all intercourſe with the citizens, put a ſtop for ſome time to the proceedings of the confederated patriots. But their project ſoon aſſumed a more regular form, and a plan of operations was now concerted with greater unanimity and coolneſs. But though they agreed in the means of oppoſing the preſent ſyſtem of tyranny, they differed very widely in regard to the uſe they ſhould make of their ſucceſs. Sidney and Howard were ardent for a commonwealth; Eſſex, from a deference to the judgment of Sidney, embraced the ſame opinion; Monmouth had entertained hopes of acquiring the crown, with certain limitations, to himſelf; but Ruſſel and Hamden were much attached to the ancient conſtitution, and intended only the excluſion of the duke and the redreſs of grievances. It was quickly perceived by the two latter, that the deſigns of the reſt of their aſſociates were not the ſame as their own. An explanation was accordingly demanded, in regard to the principle of the declaration, which was to be publiſhed, on their taking up arms; and in order to ſatisfy the ſcruples of Ruſſel and Hamden, it was agreed to declare, that

that the arms of the confederates were only defenſive, and not to be uſed againſt their ſovereign, but to be kept in their hands until a free parliament ſhould be called, which, in a conſtitutional way, and according to ancient precedent, might completely redreſs the national grievances, and ſettle the ſucceſſion.

During the dangerous delays, which the adjuſting of theſe matters neceſſarily occaſioned, an inferior order of conſpirators, who had been engaged in all Shafteſbury's projects, held frequent meetings, where they indulged their ſpleen in all thoſe looſe and deſperate diſcourſes, which are natural to men, whoſe paſſions are highly heated at atrocious acts of wickedneſs and corruption. Though many things were ſaid on the practicability of taking off the royal brothers, no deſign of that kind was laid, or reſolved on; and the whole of this black and helliſh conſpiracy, as it was termed by the court and its creatures, conſiſted in nothing more than the unguarded ſallies of honeſt indignation. But one Keyling, who was often preſent at thoſe meetings, fancying that he ſhould find it more for his intereſt to be an informer than a patriot, gave in an account of an aſſaſſination-plot to one of the ſecretaries of ſtate; and the hope of reward, or the dread of danger prompted ſome others to join in the like teſtimony.

Beſides

Beſides the warrants iſſued to ſeize numberleſs conſpirators of an inferior rank, orders were alſo given for arreſting Monmouth, Ruſſel, Grey, and Howard. Monmouth eluded the vigilance of his purſuers: Ruſſel, who was unacquainted with the cabals which had been held in the city, did not take any meaſures to effect an eſcape: he and Grey were arreſted and ſent to the Tower; and Howard, who had given ſtrong ſymptoms of perturbation, and who had been adviſed by Hamden to get out of the way, if he was either conſcious that any facts could be proved againſt him, or that he had not ſufficient fortitude to bear the worſt conſequences, was taken in his own houſe concealed in a chimney. When he found himſelf in the hands of the meſſenger, he began to cry and ſob, and on the very firſt examination told, as he himſelf ſaid, all that he knew, though, in order to earn his pardon, he afterwards made many very material additions. Eſſex, from a delicacy of ſentiment, which muſt exalt his character in the minds of all thoſe who are capable of an equal degree of generoſity, refuſed to abſcond, leſt the circumſtance of his flight ſhould affect the ſafety of Ruſſel; and was apprehended, as were alſo Sidney and Hamden, on Howard's evidence. Every day ſome of the other claſs of conſpirators were detected in their places of concealment, and thrown into priſon.

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The diſcovery of theſe matters, and the commitments which followed, had no ſooner taken air than every corner of the kingdom rang with the abuſive exclamations of the Tories. Faction, bigotry, and a ſpirit of ſcurrility ſeem, at this time, to have extinguiſhed every ſpark of generoſity as well as juſtice, in the nation. The misfortunes of the earl of Eſſex, even under the popular government of Elizabeth, were viewed with regret by his cotemporaries; but the public could now behold, not only without pity, but with almoſt incredible exultation, the moſt virtuous and exalted characters in the kingdom entrapt in the toils of power, for one ſuppoſed generous intention to recover all that uſed to be dear to Engliſhmen. A new round of addreſſes was immediately ſet on foot; and the city of London, which was now in the hands of the crown, led the way; and other corporations took their turn, in regular order, to manifeſt the exceſs of their depravity, by an unreſerved tender of fortune, life, and liberty, and by loading the Whigs with all the reproaches which the moſt envenomed imagination could ſuggeſt.

It would be foreign to the purpoſe of this ſummary to enter into the ſhocking detail of all the barbarous executions that ſoon followed. Almoſt every page of the hiſtory of this cruel and infamous reign is blotted with blood. But it is impoſſible to paſs over the fate of two of the illuſtri-

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ous ſufferers without particular notice, and without tears:

" Bring every ſweeteſt flow'r, and let me ſtrew
" The grave where RUSSEL lies, whoſe temper'd blood
" With calmeſt chearfulneſs for thee* reſign'd,
" Stain'd the ſad annals of a giddy reign,
" Aiming at lawleſs power, tho' meanly ſunk
" In looſe inglorious luxury—With him
" His friend, the Britiſh CASSIUS †, fearleſs bled,
" Of high determin'd ſpirit, roughly brave,
" By ancient learning to the enlighten'd love
" Of ancient freedom warm'd."———

THOMPSON.

* His country. † Algernon Sidney.

After the condemnation of three of thoſe, who were accuſed of a conſpiracy againſt the king's life, and who were tried firſt, in order to inflame the minds of the public, and to confound the charge of an inſurrection with that of the aſſaſſination-plot, lord Ruſſel, eminent above all the nobility for the ſimplicity of his manners, and the purity of his life, was pitched on to be the next ſacrifice. When the priſoner came into court, he deſired a delay of his trial till the next day, becauſe ſome of his witneſſes could not arrive in town before the evening. This reaſonable requeſt Pemberton, the lord chief juſtice, ſeemed inclined to comply with, but was prevented by the attorney-general, who with malignant falſehood obſerved, that the priſoner

ſoner did not intend to have granted the king the delay of one hour to ſave his life. The next important queſtion related to the jury, who were all of them ſo notoriouſly devoted to the wicked purpoſes of the court, that no candour, humanity, or juſtice was to be expected from them. But as ſuch an objection would have had no other effect than that of provoking them to perſonal revenge, they were challenged by the priſoner, on the ground of their not being freeholders; and though the law was expreſs on his ſide, yet the objection was overruled by the unanimous voice of the bench. The witneſſes againſt him were two of the city conſpirators and lord Howard, men whoſe lives were yet at the mercy of the crown: but though their evidence was incongruous, illegal, and inſufficient, yet its defects were amply ſupplied by the declamations of the crown-lawyers, and the accommodating conſciences of the jury, who brought in the priſoner guilty.

Lord Ruſſel, knowing how obnoxious he was to the court from the part he had acted on the bill of excluſion, had given up all thoughts of preſerving his life from the firſt moment of his impriſonment. However, he ſo far conformed to the earneſt ſolicitations of his friends, as to ſend a petition to the king, in which he offered to live beyond ſea in any place his majeſty ſhould name, and never to meddle any more in Engliſh affairs;

but Charles was inexorable to all intreaty. He not only rejected the petition of the condemned lord, and another from his father, the earl of Bedford, but beheld without ſympathy or remorſe lady Ruſſel, the daughter of his faithful ſervant, the late earl of Southampton, motionleſs at his feet. He even ſigned the death-warrant with an inſult; and on being told, that Monſieur Rouvigny, who was a relation to the Bedford family, was coming over with interceſſions from the court of France in favour of his kinſman, he replied, "I ſhall be glad to ſee the embaſſador, but lord Ruſſel's head will be off before he arrives."

A notion had prevailed among his lordſhip's friends, that a pardon might be procured, provided he would acknowledge the doctrine of non-reſiſtance in its fulleſt extent; and Dr. Tillotſon and Dr. Burnet endeavoured, though in vain, to reaſon the priſoner into ſuch a confeſſion *. "I can have no conception," ſaid he, "of a limited monarchy, which has not a right to defend its own limitations; and my conſcience will not permit me to ſay otherwiſe to the king." Lord Cavendiſh

* Tillotſon, though he wrote a letter on the ſubject of paſſive obedience to the priſoner the very day before his execution, yet afterwards confeſſed, even in the preſence of the king and duke of York, "that he was now of lord Ruſſel's opinion, and that circumſtances might happen in which it would be lawful to reſiſt."

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had lived in the cloſeſt intimacy with Ruſſel, and did not deſert his friend in the preſent calamity: he offered to manage his eſcape by changing cloaths with him; but the priſoner refuſed to ſave his own life by an expedient, which might expoſe his friend to many hardſhips; and when the duke of Monmouth ſent a meſſage, that he would chearfully ſurrender himſelf, if Ruſſel thought that this meaſure would any wiſe contribute to his ſafety, "It will be no advantage to me" he ſaid, "to have my friends die with me."

The conduct of lord Ruſſel during his trial, his confinement, at his death, and, in a more ſevere teſt of fortitude, the parting with his wife and children, was perfectly conformable to that dignified ſimplicity, purity, and devotion, which had diſtinguiſhed the whole tenour of his life. With a deep ſilence, with a long and fixed look, in which reſpect and affection, unmingled with paſſion, were expreſſed, lord and lady Ruſſel parted for ever: his eyes followed her's, while ſhe quitted the room, and when he loſt ſight of her, he ſaid to Dr. Burnet, who attended him in the character of a friend and clergyman, "The bitterneſs of death is now paſſed."

With a view of indulging the inſolence of party, and of mortifying the excluſioniſts with the ſight of their beloved leader conducted to execution through the principal ſtreets of London, the ſcaf-

fold was erected in Lincoln's-Inn Fields; a circumſtance which, however it might ſhock the feelings of his friends, had no effect on the priſoner, who whilſt he ſeemed touched with the tenderneſs of thoſe among the ſpectators who could not refrain from tears, expreſſed no indignation at others who had the barbarity to inſult him in his paſſage. On looking towards Southampton-houſe, the tear ſtarted in his eye, but he inſtantly wiped it away. He was attended by Dr. Tillotſon and Dr. Burnet, the one to aſſiſt him in his devotion, and the other to do juſtice to his memory; and when he arrived at the ſcaffold, addreſſing himſelf to one of the ſheriffs, he ſaid, he did not love much ſpeaking, nor expected now to be well heard; he had therefore ſet down in a paper, which he then delivered *, what he had thought proper to leave behind him; and added, "God knows how far I always was from any deſigns againſt the king's perſon, or of altering the government; and I ſtill pray for the preſervation of both, and the proteſtant religion. In the words of a dying man I profeſs I know of no plot either againſt the king's life, or the government; but I have now done with this world, and am going to a better: I forgive all my enemies: I thank God, I die in charity with all

* It contained a modeſt defence of his ſentiments and conduct, and a warning to all denominations of proteſtants againſt thoſe fatal animoſities, which expoſed them to the common enemy.

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men; and I wiſh all ſincere proteſtants may love one another, and not make way for popery by their animoſities. After ſome time ſpent in devotion, the priſoner embraced his two friends, and with a a chearful and ſerene countenance, laid his head on the block, which was ſevered from the body by two ſtrokes of the axe; and, to the mortification of the court, the ſpirit of party was ſo far ſubdued by ſympathy, that on the expoſure of the bleeding head, with the uſual proclamation, the ſcaffold reſounded with the univerſal groans and lamentations of the ſpectators.

On the day that lord Ruſſel was brought to his trial, the king and the duke of York, from a curioſity unworthy of their rank, or the characters of gentlemen, went to the Tower, in order to ſee him paſs. As they were going back to their barge, the cry followed, that lord Eſſex had cut his own throat; and this intelligence was quickly conveyed to the Old Bailey, where the king's counſel made a very unwarrantable uſe of it to confirm the plot, and to render lord Ruſſel more apparently guilty: a circumſtance that gave the ſtronger credit to another report which immediately prevailed, that the earl had not been his own murderer, but that he had been very opportunely diſpoſed of by the hands of others.

The other illuſtrious ſufferer, whoſe blood was ſpilt to ſatisfy the coward rage of the royal butchers, was Algernon Sidney, whoſe virtues and talents may be fairly put in competition with thoſe of the moſt exalted character that any age or country could boaſt of. He had entered deeply into the war againſt the late king; and, on account of the well known firmneſs of his attachment to the republican cauſe, was nominated one of the judges in the high court, by whom Charles was condemned; but from a delicacy of ſentiment, ſimilar to that of ſir Henry Vane upon the ſame occaſion, he did not take his ſeat at the trial. He continued the zealous ſupporter of the government, while it preſerved the form and ſpirit of a republic; and on the ſame motives, which influenced his conduct during the civil war, he was one of the fierceſt opponents to the uſurpation of the Cromwells. When the independent parliament was reſtored, on the reſignation of Richard, Mr. Sidney was appointed one of the council of ſtate, and was ſoon after ſent to the Sound with other commiſſioners to mediate a peace between Denmark and Sweden. The reſtoration of monarchy took place before his return; and when every man, according to his hopes or fears, was ſuing either for favour or pardon, Sidney choſe to remain in baniſhment, rather than ſubmit to a government, which owed its eſtabliſhment to the blackeſt ſpecies

cies of treachery, and which, from its firſt outſet, threatened the deſtruction of religion, morals, and civil liberty.

Sidney continued abroad till the year 1677, when, from the impulſe of filial piety, he returned to England, to viſit his dying father, the earl of Leiceſter; and was afterwards detained by a vexatious law-ſuit with his elder brother, who refuſed to pay what was left him in his father's will. The hope of becoming inſtrumental to the ſalvation of his unhappy country engaged him in thoſe heroic deſigns which had ſo fatal an iſſue. When, on the accuſation of being concerned in the plot againſt the government and the king's perſon, he was ſeized and brought before the council, he told them, "that he would make the beſt defence he could; but he would not fortify their evidence by any thing he ſhould ſay." This propriety of conduct, in which ſimplicity and dignity were admirably united, as it confirmed the court in the opinion that was entertained of the priſoner's character, confirmed them alſo in the reſolution of depriving him of an exiſtence, which, whilſt adorned with ſuch exalted and formidable virtues, at once created terror, and, when judged by the rule of compariſon, reflected diſgrace.

As lord Howard was the only witneſs againſt Sidney, other ſteps were taken to ſecure his death

by the moſt abominable contrivances. Pemberton, who had betrayed ſome ſymptoms of moderation, or of ſhame at lord Ruſſel's trial, was removed; and Jefferies, whoſe well known profligacy might be depended on, and who had outranted all his brethren in outrageous abuſe againſt the conſpirators, was appointed lord chief juſtice. With him were joined three other judges, whoſe corruption and ſervility perfectly qualified them for ſitting on the ſame bench. A jury was returned, conſiſting of perſons of low and mean condition, and who had been ſeverally examined on the pliability of their conſciences. One Parry, who had been guilty of ſeveral murders, was pardoned, and received a commiſſion to act as juſtice of peace, that he might be enabled to help forward this important buſineſs; but as diſcretion made no part of his virtues, he boaſted to one of the duke of York's ſervants, whom he ſuppoſed a friend to the injuries intended againſt Sidney, "that he had ſent in a great many names of jurors who were *ſure men*."

The trial was conducted with ſuch a diſregard both of decency and juſtice, as carried upon the very face of it an avowal of the pre-determined reſolution of the court to deprive the priſoner of life. His tender of a ſpecial plea, his demand of a copy of his indictment, his exceptions to ſeveral of the jury for not being freeholders were all rejected.

jected. In order to ſupply the place of a ſecond witneſs, as the law required two, and no other plauſible perjurer could be found to concur with Howard, ſome diſcourſes on government, which had been found in ranſacking the priſoner's cloſet, were produced and admitted by the bench as ſufficient to complete the neceſſary evidence. But beſides that a ſimilitude of hand-writing was not ſuch a proof of his being the author, as could juſtify a verdict for taking away his life, the diſcourſes themſelves, though favourable to liberty, maintained ſuch principles only, as the beſt and the wiſeſt men under all governments have been known to embrace. Sidney defended himſelf with a ſagacity and preciſion, which would have done honour to the ableſt lawyer that ever ſat on the bench, or pleaded at the bar. But the iſſue of this mock trial was pre-determined; and the jury having withdrawn merely for ſhew, returned in about half an hour, and brought in the priſoner guilty.

That elevation of ſentiment, that dignity of ſoul which appears in every part of Sidney's conduct, and which age and infirmity had in no degree abated, ſhone forth with a ſingular luſtre on the fatal day which put a period to his glorious life. He walked to the place of execution: he aſked no friend to attend him: he aſcended the ſcaffold with the air of one who came to harangue, or to command, not to ſuffer: he told the ſheriffs who had returned

returned a packed jury againſt him, that it was for their ſakes only that he reminded them, that his blood lay on their heads; and when he was aſked if he had any thing to ſay to the people, he anſwered; "I have made my peace with God, and I have nothing to ſay to man: I am ready to die, and will give you no farther trouble." Thus ſaying, he haſtened to the block; and his head was ſevered from the body with one ſtroke of the axe. A vindication of himſelf, which he left behind him, is written with a ſpirit in all reſpects equal to what might have been expected from the illuſtrious author of the Diſcourſes on Government: he confuted the teſtimonies on which he had been condemned, and aſſerted that, to reach him, the bench had been filled with men who were the blemiſhes of the bar; and he regretted death chiefly becauſe it had been inflicted by mean hands. In his own injuries, he lamented thoſe which his country had ſuſtained; and he laid down with admirable clearneſs the great and generous principles of policy, which can alone give any permanent happineſs to civil ſociety *.

Other

* Lord Ruſſel ſuffered on the twenty-firſt of July 1683, and Algernon Sidney on the ſeventh of December following. The narrow limits of a ſummary will admit only of a few of the moſt ſtriking points in the trial, execution, and characters of thoſe revered martyrs to the cauſe of liberty. But ample juſtice is done to their memories in the ſeventh volume of Mrs. Macaulay's

Other executions followed thoſe of Ruſſel and Sidney; and where no pretence could be found for a charge of treaſon, royal vengeance was gratified by indictments for miſdemeanors and libels; and ſuch heavy fines were impoſed as amounted to perpetual impriſonment. The clergy alſo, not to fall ſhort of the lawyers in teſtimonies of their zeal, made the churches ring with the doctrines of non-reſiſtance; and leſt the united influence of the ſurplice and the gown might not be able to extinguiſh every ſpark of public ſpirit, a ſtanding army, under the name of guards, was increaſed and kept up to compleat the terror and deſpair of all well-wiſhers to liberty. This triumph over oppreſſed patriotiſm was, however, but of ſhort continuance. Charles did not enjoy thoſe ſpectacles of cruelty and blood above a year longer. An apoplexy, or as ſome believed, poiſon put an end to his wicked and infamous exiſtence on the ſixth of February, 1685. A Scotch prieſt attended him in his laſt moments, to ſoothe the horrors of his guilty conſcience, and to prepare him for eternity by the hurried efforts of the moſt abject ſuperſtition.

It is ſaid, that a little before Charles's death, he began to repent of his arbitrary proceedings; and

ley's Hiſtory, from which, as being beyond all compariſon the beſt that has yet appeared in the Engliſh language, the above ſupplement is principally taken.

reſolved

reſolved to make a change in his ſyſtem of adminiſtration. We will not diſpute the poſſibility of his having formed ſuch a deſign; but the moſt candid ſurvey of his character and conduct muſt prevent our aſcribing it to any laudable motive. Indolence and cowardice, not political virtue, often made him ſtop upon the brink of ruin; but his principles were not the leſs vicious and tyrannical, though he ſometimes ſhrunk from conteſts, which were likely to interrupt his pleaſures, or to endanger his perſon and government.

JAMES

JAMES II.

AS all offices had been filled, and all meaſures concerted, towards the cloſe of the preceding reign, with the full concurrence and advice of the duke of York, no change either in the miniſtry, or in the late ſyſtem took place upon his acceſſion to the throne. With manners leſs conciliating than thoſe of the deceaſed tyrant, he aimed at the ſame exerciſe of uncontrouled authority; and ſuperadded to the inheritance of his brother's worſt vices a greater bigotry of principle, a greater vehemence of temper, and a greater obſtinacy of will, qualities which happily proved more fatal to himſelf than to his country.

Though James was no ſooner proclaimed than he ordered the cuſtoms, and the greater part of the exciſe, which had been voted to the late king for his life only, to be levied as uſual, yet he ſtrove to ſoften the illegal harſhneſs of this proceeding by calling a parliament. His views are fully explained in a converſation he had upon the ſubject with the French embaſſador, as ſtated in one of Monſieur Barillon's diſpatches. "I have reſolved," ſaid he, "to call a parliament immediately—I ſhall at the ſame time publiſh a declaration for maintaining myſelf in the enjoyment of all my brother's revenues.

nues. Without this proclamation for a parliament, I ſhould run too great a riſk in ſeizing directly what was eſtabliſhed in the deceaſed king's life-time. It is a deciſive ſtroke for me to enter into poſſeſſion and enjoyment: hereafter it will be much eaſier either to put off the meeting of parliament, or to ſupport myſelf by other means which may appear more convenient." He did not, indeed, long continue even to affect popularity. As ſoon as the duke of Monmouth's rebellion afforded him a pretence for keeping a formidable army on foot, he threw off the maſk, and blindly gave way to the furious dictates of his arbitrary ſpirit. Tyranny is never more violent than when impelled by religious zeal to break through all the reſtraints of policy and caution. James's total diſregard of both accelerated the REVOLUTION, to which we are indebted for what ſtill remains of our civil and religious liberty.

It is very evident from the ſteps which James took at that time, that he expected very little oppoſition from the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church, whoſe ſermons had been ſo long filled with the doctrines of PASSIVE OBEDIENCE and NON-RESISTANCE. He had no doubt but that the practice of thoſe ſtrenuous advocates for royal prerogative would correſpond with the leſſons which they inculcated. To his great diſappointment, a few of the biſhops made a noble ſtand in the cauſe of religion;

religion; but had not the diſſenters forgot all private enmities at the moment of danger and alarm:—had they not formed a generous coalition with the very men by whom they had been illiberally perſecuted, popery and deſpotiſm would then have eſtabliſhed themſelves on the ruins of the Britiſh conſtitution.

FINIS.